HUNTING NOTES

IN

SHROPSHIRE AND CHESHIRE,

1884-85.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY BORDERER.

Price TWO SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE.



JOHN A. SEAVERNS

Nugent Howard

Jan: 1885



HUNTING AND SPORTING NOTES

IN

SHROPSHIRE AND CHESHIRE,

SEASON 1884-85.

CONTAINING ACCOUNTS OF
RUNS WITH SIR WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNN'S, THE SOUTH CHESHIRE,
SHROPSHIRE, ALBRIGHTON, LUDLOW, SOUTH HEREFORD,
RADNORSHIRE AND WEST HEREFORD,
AS WELL AS A WEEK IN YORKSHIRE;

BY

"BORDERER."

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS,

By H. F. MYTTON.

"On your favourite's back
May you follow the pack,
Like a bird through the air may you fly!
And may every steed,
That you purchase or breed,
Be the best that money can buy."—*Clarke Kennedy.*

1885.

LONDON:

A. H. BAILY & CO., 15, NICHOLAS LANE, E.C.

SHREWSBURY:

"EDDOWES'S SHREWSBURY JOURNAL" OFFICE, 7, THE SQUARE.

INDEX TO ILLUSTRATIONS.

Mr. A. P. Heywood-Lonsdale	.	Frontispiece.
Atcham Bridge	Opposite page	7
A Watery Episode—The Tern ..	„	19
Sir Watkin	„	23
The Meet at Berwick	„	41
A Cheshire Start	„	57
The Losford Brook	„	60
Who shot the fox?	„	64
A Collision	„	64
Mr. Reginald Corbet	„	82
Sir Thomas Boughey, Bart	„	86
Habitués	„	92
Mr. C. W. Wicksted	„	97
"Good Ones"	„	106

HUNTING AND SPORTING NOTES

IN

SHROPSHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

SEASON 1884-85.

INTRODUCTION.

Mr. Bromley Davenport says with great truth, "Perhaps no greater anomaly, no more palpable anachronism, exists in England than Foxhunting. Yet it has been called, and is, the National Sport."

In spite of the march of improvement—high farming, —the intersection of the country by roads and railways —the straightening of fences—the multiplication of dwellings—the democratising of the world—the over preservation of game—the sneers of overburdened intellects—and last, though not least, the hard times through which we are passing—hunting wavers not, halts not, ceases not. As one season succeeds another, its votaries are on the increase, its health giving, invigorating, and manly unselfish influences are more and more appreciated, and it proudly maintains its title to be "The Sport of Kings and people." If one typical character, more than another, that all sportsmen are so fond of quoting,

shows the liberality of hunting, (if I may so express it), it is "Old Jorrocks." His character shows us how a tallow chandler and good sportsman can be combined, and how the essence of vulgarity even is capable of establishing itself in our estimation. Merely because the sporting instinct was nurtured, grew, and triumphed in the same personation, and set its mark on him, so unmistakeably that to aristocrat and democrat alike he was a sportsman first, and a fine old cad afterwards; standing up bravely and consistently for his pink cloth, and shaming all those who were half-hearted or unreal in their sporting tastes.

It is because I believe hunting to hold the first place in the affections of the many in the district where my lot is now cast that I have ventured to republish, in the form of a diary, my notes on the past hunting season. We cannot burnish any baser metal to the brightness of gold, nor can I make the doings of our chronicle, rub them up as industriously as possible, shine so brightly as I would. The truth must be told that the season of 1884-85 has been a disappointing one, from causes many, and not far to seek.

First of all it followed the best on record.

Secondly: It opened with an exceptionally dry Autumn, and this want of moisture has more or less been maintained throughout.

Thirdly: Scent, (consequent chiefly on the first two reasons,) has been unprecedently bad and uncertain, except on the grass.

Fourthly: The foxes have run short. Gone to ground almost invariably, and, in some parts, have been decidedly scarce.

This last reason I attribute to three causes. More old foxes were killed last season than usual, and, consequently, old dog foxes were not so numerous as they should have been at the opening of the season. Then cubs were more plentiful than usual, and have run

unusually short and badly, and, lastly, the dry weather had induced them to go more to ground than before. Every drain in the country has been inhabited by them, and the present battue shooting arrangements so bamboozle them, in addition to the heading and badgering of cubhunting, that, in addition to lying underground, they have laid out in the open more than I ever knew them in any previous season.

Do not be discouraged, my hunting friends, at this long list of predisposing causes for our many and various disappointments this season. Remember that none of them are chronic. Next Autumn we may have a greater average rainfall. More old foxes to start on, because less have been killed. Better scent, and fewer cubs badgered to death in our best coverts without being afforded a chance of escape in the open. We shall have the chance of preventing the continual "gone to ground" business, to which we have been treated this year, by our stopping up, during the summer, the drains and holes, which we now know are frequented by outlying foxes.

It must not be supposed, however, that these notes contain nothing but one long growl of disappointment, for in truth scarce a week throughout the season has passed without one little glimpse of sunshine in the shape of sport reaching me, and being delightedly noted down. In fact it is astonishing how persistently this has been the case, except, perhaps, when that tryingly intermittent frost put in its oar at Christmas, and robbed the schoolboys and holiday-makers of their accustomed jollities.

It must be universally acknowledged that Mr. Reginald Corbet, in South Cheshire, has carried off the palm for sport. On the grass his hounds have run fast—day after day. His small coverts enable him to get away on the back of his fox, and his hounds are a marvel of quickness as well as deathliness. His runs have been for the most part rings, although there have been

brilliant exceptions, and his great hard-riding field have been wonderfully entertained and kept in order. Borderer has been unable to do justice to many of their best days. Two things are lacking to him for the enjoyment of South Cheshire—first rate horseflesh, and more unemployed leisure. He still lives in hope.

Sir Watkin Williams Wynn has without a doubt had a better season than last year. Has killed more foxes, and had some straightaway runs with blood at the end of them. Last year Goodall was fresh to the country, and I hardly saw him catch a fox in the Whitchurch country. This year he has killed many, some of them, no doubt, bad ones, and has chopped too many to please me; still it is but justice to him to say that he has had more that an average season, and he will take with him, into whatever country he goes, the credit for being a determined horseman and a keen sportsman. Not quite the man to have followed Payne or Walker, undoubtedly, and, while I write, all hunting ears in the West Midlands are on the *qui vive* to catch the name of his probable successor, for where is the hunting-man who does not pray for the Wynnstay kennel prestige to be kept up? and to see a first-rate huntsman installed in that princely establishment?

The Albrighton have had to contend with greater difficulties perhaps this year than any other Shropshire pack, on account of the dry weather acting unfavourably on their light ploughs, and yet they have, gained a creditable verdict at my hands. Perhaps I have been lucky in seeing them in their best scenting country, still I fancy their record of foxes will prove a good one. As a pack of hounds they are beautiful, especially the bitch pack. So much music, drive, and hunt, I have seen nowhere else except it be in the Ludlow. Sir Thomas Boughey goes on for another three years, greatly to the delight of all. He has the true sport at heart, has studied the business, and backed up by such a thorough sportswoman as Lady Boughey,

[illegible]

has mastered it; how seldom can this be said of M.F.H.'s? He has done wisely too in making Captain Boycott Wight his deputy-master on the Worcestershire side, who, now that he has gone to live at Rudge, is as excellently placed in that country as Aqualate is badly so for Sir Thomas to reach it. I trust that Scott and his whips will continue as servants, for no set of men that I have seen this season work better together, and are keener to show sport than they are.

The Shropshire ought perhaps to have taken precedence of the Albrighton in my remarks, as being the central county pack, yet I believe the Albrighton are of about equal date in point of institution with the Shropshire, as Nimrod gives an account of them in his Shropshire tour, when, under the mastership of Mr. Boycott, of Rudge, no doubt an ancester of Captain Boycott Wight's, they hunted at Chillington and Apley, at the same time that Sir Bellingham Graham took the Shropshire.

The life of the Shropshire has fallen on pleasant paths inasmuch as no pecuniary difficulties trouble them; no insufficiency of staff; no lack of horseflesh; no half-hunting their country, has to be complained of. Lord Hill's successor was hard to find, as I have said in my notes, but he *has been found*, and Mr. Heywood Lonsdale has inaugurated his first season in a style that bids fair to win him a name and fame as an M.F.H., and to enrol him among the long list of Shropshire worthies.

o expense is spared to make every appointment up to mark—just as it should be, without bunkum or show. The Shropshire hounds, thanks to Lord Hill, ably aided by Thatcher, are, without the slightest shadow of a doubt, a beautiful pack. Such symmetry, dash, and tongue, combined with handiness, Borderer has seldom seen equalled, and on the flags, he thinks Shropshire can show three packs of hounds that any county in England would be proud of, and these are the Shropshire, the Albrighton, and the Ludlow.

Thatcher may have his detractors, and I know I have more than once been hard on him—not however, so much as a detractor as a critic. His good points undoubtedly outweigh his weak ones, and although it is not always wise in the critic to professedly array himself on one side or the other, I may admit that I think Thatcher is an excellent man, and that Mr. Lonsdale has done wisely in retaining his services. In the kennel he has few superiors. In the field he has the love and confidence of his hounds, and his casts are quick, clever, and generally succesful. He can ride to his hounds anywhere, when his mount suits him, and he thoroughly knows his business. More than this, he his a most pleasant, good tempered man in the field, which is saying more than I can for the generality of huntsmen. There does not seem much loophole here for fault-finding, and my readers must judge for themselves, whether I have erred or not in my estimate of our Shropshire huntsman. His first whip, Will Beavan, is a capital servant—a fine horseman, quick, quiet, and, keen. Much to the regret of all he, leaves, to benefit himself however, as he takes, I believe, the horn in South Staffordshire next season. Borderer wishes him well, and will watch his career with interest. The second whip also gets a lift, and is going to Lord Middleton. New servants are always a drawback to a hunt, but it is a feather in a huntsman's cap to have promotion awarded to his whips.

Of sport this season with the Shropshire, I wish I could speak with higher encomiums. Compared with last year it has been moderate; compared with other packs it has been average. There have been many unlucky and disappointing days; there has been a lack of scent on the ploughs, and a lack of foxes in some important quarters, both of which causes have been deterrents from the attainment of the acme of our hopes and desires. Luckily, however, both are, we trust, ephemeral, and with such a master, and such a pack of hounds, surely there is not a true man in the county, or

at all events in that part of it where the Shropshire hunt, that will not religiously preserve foxes from now till the end of the chapter. Lord Hill has shown a noble example as an Ex-M.F.H. in this respect, for Hawkstone, both hill and dale, has been full of foxes throughout the season, and great have been the incursions into Sir Watkin's country from there. Mr. Arthur Lloyd, of Leaton Knoll, too, has kept his side of the Chester railway in an excellently preserved state, as the many calls on it have testified. Sir Vincent Corbet also responded to all the appeals made upon his coverts in the affirmative, with one or two exceptions, and then I believe there were local causes for the disappointment. Mr. Bibby has done his best, and will have a hand in making a new gorse, near Shinglers, this spring. No one enjoys the fun more than he does. Mr. Slaney Eyton at Walford, has shown sport from his Merrington coverts, and would like to see them even better tenanted than they are. Mr. Sparrow, at Albrighton, religiously befriends foxes, and has plenty in Preston Gubbalds. In the Peplow, Hinstock, and Hodnet country, there are good friends and true. High Ercall and Withyford have not turned out, this year, a foxey country, the cause for which Borderer knows not, but believes it to be accidental. Battlefield has certainly not upheld the great name and fame of Corbet, this season. Mr. Dryden Corbet, however, is such a thorough and excellent sportsman, although not a hunter, that he will, I am sure, not be appealed to in vain, if the petition to preserve a few more foxes in this great nursery of the hunt is properly worded. We must not forget, however, that Holly Coppice and Haughmond Hill have afforded us some foxes, and that probably the best run of the season was that one hour and thirteen minutes from Holly Coppice to the foot of the Wrekin, with a brilliant

finish in the open. Lord Berwick has been a thorough friend to the hunting men of Shropshire. He has shown conclusively that foxes and pheasants can live together at Attingham, and has never grudged the pleasure-seekers of the county town and neighbourhood a day in his park when the hounds came to Atcham Bridge. I wish I could say that some visitors had not taken advantage of this kindness to be heedless of their goings and comings over private walks, grass plots, and lawns. But Lord Berwick lays not this damage to the door of the true foxhunters, and he looks to them to prevent others doing rude and thoughtless things. Longnor coverts have been almost tenantless this season, an unwished for occurrence on the part of its owner, and unlikely to occur again. In the South, Colonel Cotes, at Pitchford, has done his best to have foxes, and will, I am sure, continue to do so. Mr. Hulton Harrop's heart is in the right place, and so we believe is Mr. Pelham's, at Cound. Sir Frederick Smythe has never failed this season to show foxes at Acton Burnell, and we honor him for it, as he is not now able to join in the sport himself. Of the Condover property, "the least said soonest mended." There is, I hear, every chance of better things next season hereabouts. At Onslow we had one foxey day, which cost Borderer some trouble. He will not revert to it, because he desires to bury the hatchet, in full assurance that there is now no bad blood between him and Colonel Wingfield. The more to demonstrate this, he has eliminated from these notes all reference to the subject which led to a correspondence between him and the Colonel, and trusts that foxes and phesants will go together at Onslow in the future, as pleasantly as Horses and Hounds have done in the pages of *Eddowes's Journal*. Sir Baldwin Leighton has found foxes for us twice at Loton, and each time has seen one killed. Rowton Castle, now that the shooting is in the hands of Mr. Shaw, will, next season, I am sure give us some runs, especially if that pot-hunting neighbouring farmer will give

up shooting them, and the foxes themselves will determine not to poke their bodies into narrow drains, and thus commit suicide. General Jenkins, I hope, still has his chap-in-a-tree, although I fear his keeper thinks the situation too near the pheasants. Bickley ought to breed us once more a good a litter of cubs, and Hanwood Gorse should return to its old reputation. Netley, too, has been unfortunate this season, while Cressage and Frodesley have afforded foxes when required. To sum up, I think that I can safely say that the Shropshire's star is in the ascendant, and whether she retains her unity of North and South beyond the coming season, or not, she will have the satisfaction of knowing that in hunting matters she has pulled herself together not a little. New gorse coverts are on the tapis. Over preservation of game is becoming discountenanced. The determination to back up a good and princely-minded sportsman, who has come to their rescue, has taken possession of people and although they cannot quite repeat with truth the parody of Mr. Bromley Davenport on the greater Shires:

"Quo cunque adspicias, nihil est nisi *gramen* et aër,"

They can truly say that a plentitude of enjoyment is to be won by them over the grass and plough in varying similitudes through Salopia's fair vale.

I have yet a few words to say about the Ludlow pack, that, under the long reign of Mr. C. W. Wicksted, have made for themselves a name, which is fast extending beyond their own border as well as county. It is hardly to be wondere that the son of him, whom Warburton delights to honour in such strains as these—

> "A fig for your Leicestershire swells
> While Wicksted such sport can ensure,
> Long life to that varmint old Wells!
> Success to the country of Woore!
> Let Statesmen on politics parley,
> Let heroes go fight for renown,
> While I've health to go hunting with Charley
> I envy no Monarch his crown—"

should have brought foxhunting in South Shropshire and part of North Hereford to such a state of perfection.

Hounds have always been a family passion with the Wicksteds, and the love and knowledge of them has come down lineally upon the present representatives of the family both at Betley, in Cheshire, and at Ludlow, in a marked degree. If you want to learn anything of the characteristics of a good and perfect hound go and spend a day with Wicksted in his kennels, or any one else's kennels, for he is not egotistical or narrowminded in his eye to a hound. So it comes that he has, after twenty years' labour, got together a lot of high-bred hounds, that can hunt, speak, and drive through one of the most difficult and intricate contries in the West Midlands. He is backed, too, by the most genuinely sportsman-like set of country gentlemen that Shropshire possesses. His foxes are almost uniformly preserved, and his fields are select, without any ignorant tail, and include plenty of farmers. It has not been Borderer's luck to reach his meets this season more than once, and then only for a few short hours, but he has been able to retail more than one excellent run that has fallen to their lot, and has missed several others quite worthy of a place in these notes.

The Ludlow season has been decidedly a good one, and above the average. Their runs have been remarkable, not only for straightness, but from having started from some of their biggest woodlands and gone straight into Radnorshire or the United Countries, reaching points never before attained by these hounds in living memory. Nothing could speak more strongly for the pack than this, and "the little Ludlow," as they were once called, have reason indeed to be proud of their doings. The master has handed the horn that he carried for so many years to Johnson, who acted last season as his kennel huntsman and first whip. Johnson is young, but has shown himself to be made of the true metal, as he has picked up all the good points of his master's craft, and adds to them the advantages of being a first-rate horseman, keen, quick, and quiet. He served his

apprenticeship with the Shropshire, so that we have a double interest in Johnson, and wish him well in every way. Perhaps the Ludlow bears away the palm for sport, next to Mr. Reginald Corbet, this season.

The Wheatland I have been unable to write of this season, but am living in hope as regards the future. Mr. J. C. Allen retires from the mastership at the end of the season, and his successor has been chosen, but I am not now in a position to speak of him or the prospects of this tight little sporting hunt.

The United pack also have certainly cause to growl at their old friend Borderer for not having taken any notice of them during the season I can only plead guilty, and trust in their clemency and forgiveness. Many is the happy day that I have enjoyed with the United pack, from the early days of old Robert Luther down to a couple of seasons back with John Harris. Indeed, it was Luther that gave me my first honestly won brush, when we found a fox in Lingen Valletts, and ran him to Stanage, over Reeve's Hill to Norton, across the river Lugg, to the Beggar's Bush and Evancoyd, to Womaston, over Knill Garroway, and, turning down, killed him in the river Hindwell, close to Knill Court. I was just eight and a half years old, but can remember every turn of that run as if it was yesterday, and can see plainly one man plunging into Evancoyd Pool by mistake, and his horse swimming about in it. Old Luther fastened the brush on the crupper of my pony's (Old Lion) saddle, and told me was "a made sportsman." He little knew perhaps how much that speech had to answer for, and how but for that flattering encouragement Borderer might have . . . No, come this won't do, these egotistical recollections have no proper place in this diary.

I am indebted to Mr. Mytton for the illustrations of these notes. There is much in a name, but there is more in a lineal descent. Never was a truer example of a grandfather's love of sport displayed in the grandson.

The one the great actor over Shropshire pastures, the other as fond of the sport, although unable at present to pursue it, and a clever portrayer of hunting field sketches—a talent that I trust will ere long bring him grist to the mill.

BORDERER.

April 8th, 1885.

HUNTING AND SPORTING NOTES

IN

SHROPSHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

FIRST WEEK:—October 27 to November 1.

In Shropshire there is no need that I should plead excuses for treating your readers each week to a few practical commentaries on such a sporting theme as this. A chronicle that deals with the leading sports is certain to win smiles all round the Wrekin; and, if it fails to claim your approval, or even indulgence, the fault will lie with the author rather than his subject.

The thread of discourse, as it breaks upon us this week, is taken up at a most opportune moment. The flickering embers of a racing season are giving way to the bright scarlet flash of an opening hunting season, and sportsmen who have a horse and a hound are buckling on their armour for the chase. A few words on the departing racing season, and I will leave it only to touch hereafter on its local aspect, as week by week it may crop up at Shrewsbury, or elsewhere within the radius of your ken. The season of 1884 will be notorious for its Derby dead heat; its ephemeral plunger—Sir John Willoughby; its loss of Lord Falmouth, and his great sale; its hard ground; and the unbounded success of an ex-tout, jockey's valet, and clever owner and backer of horses—Mr. John Hammond—who, yesterday a wayfarer, has to-day become fortune's favourite—the owner of two such great

horses as St. Gatien and Florence, and the proud possessor of the Jockey Club Cup! What an example of the great levelling tendency of the turf! The man who, in common with all his class, has scarce withstood the ban of Jockey Club wrath, or avoided being hunted from their heath, comes and, at the first attempt, wins their two great handicaps, and places their proud trophy on his plebeian sideboard, chuckling over the £150,000 that he counted as his gains in a single year, to keep it in dignity!

Shropshire is not without the honour of its season's doings. It has aided Mr. Hammond in his triumphs. Wisdom, the sire of Florence, and Enigma, her dam, hail from Snifnal. She is, therefore, a native-born one. How well I recollect looking over that pretty, neat little horse Wisdom, at Tattersalls', the day before he was bought for a very few hundreds, to come into Shropshire, and thinking that, taking as he was to the eye, how little likely he looked to make a name for himself at the stud. Florence's dam, Enigma, cost £25, I believe, and St. Gatien's repudiated sire was condemned to the life of a cab horse, until his brilliant son dragged him from his obscurity. Talking of Wisdom, he is more curiously inbred to Pocahontas than any animal I know, his sire being by Blinkhoolie, by Rataplan, and his dam by Stockwell, both sons of Pocahontas. Let us speak it in all honour of Mr. Hammond. He has showed an example worthy to be followed by some members of the Jockey Club in the straightforward way he has run his horses. Only one question of the British public remains unanswered by him—What was Florence doing on the City and Suburban day with 6st. 12lb. on her back, from Tattenham Corner to the winning post?

And now to hunting. Such a spell of fine autumn weather, with scarce a drop of rain, has never been chronicled for the last half century, and undergrowth in the coverts has increased marvellously. The partridge shooters have had an unparalleled time of it, while hunting has been surrounded by difficulties. Foxes like all other animals this season, have bred well, and are plentyful, notwithstanding that more were killed last year by hounds than ever before. Mr. Heywood-Lonsdale, in succeeding Lord Hill in the mastership of the Shropshire has undertaken no mean task, and every huntsman round

the Wrekin regrets the cause of such a fine sportsman as Lord Hill having to retire. He hands over, however, to his successor a pack of hounds faultless in shape, and wellnigh matchless in the field, a huntsman, in Alfred Thatcher, who is thoroughly up to his work, a good kennelman, knows what his hounds are doing, and is known of them; not altogether a bruiser, but where hounds really run he is there or thereabouts, and his first whip, Harry Bevans, is sure to be handy, for he is a veritable horseman, not to be denied. Cubs have died in plenty—some fifteen braces of them—but of runs in the open there have been very few. Indeed the orders have universally been "not to let 'em go." The state of the ground has been an excuse for this, and yet I confess to be the opponent of heading and badgering cubs or foxes to death, as at present practised, especially when it leads as it did the other day, to the staining of Rowton gorse, the cream of the country, with blood, and thereby probably rendering it blank up to Christmas. I should be unfaithful to the truth if I did not lament, in common with many others, the scarcity of foxes south of the river. Pitchford held three or four one morning, and better things are reported Rowton way than last year. An old fox only at Lythewood; Cound and Cressage doubtful. Stapleton indisturbed. Condover, including Bomere, utterly blank; and hunting men are to pay £600 a year for the pleasure of seeing all this stretch of country drawn, knowing that it contains less than half a dozen litters of foxes by way of a start!

Next week hunting news will be in full swing. At present everybody is praying for rain. Below are the reports of some of our local packs, culled from *Baily's Magazine* for this month.

The Albrighton have no changes to report. Plenty of foxes and lots of blood; in fact, too many foxes killed some mornings to please old sportsmen, who are waiting for the ground to be rideable.

Cheshire.—No change, except Harry Jones to be second whip. Very good prospects of sport; plenty of foxes, but very bad scent.

Cheshire South.—Mr. Corbet has William Neat as a new second whip. Reports a very good show of foxes everywhere, and scent fair until the ground became hard and dry. Ground Game Act has decimated the rabbits.

Foxes consequently work the poultry to such an extent that it is next to impossible to keep pace with the demands for poultry damage on the part of the farmers.

THE LUDLOW.—No change, except that Johnson has taken the horn for the present; plenty of foxes, but scent on the limestone hills next to nothing, and cubs very difficult to catch.

THE SHROPSHIRE.—Mr. Heywood-Lonsdale succeeds Lord Hill as master, and has had a successful cub-hunting, notwithstanding the dry weather. Found plenty of cubs north of the Severn, and had plenty of blood. The young entry work well, and there is no lack of music in the coverts.

STAFFORDSHIRE, NORTH.—No change, except that the second whip, Chandler, has left. A very fair season so far; scent not good. Killed eleven brace up to the 6th of October.

STAFFORDSHIRE, SOUTH.—No change, except as to the second whip. Good sport through cub-hunting, accounting for their fox every day. Wonderful show of foxes at Maple Hayes, Lysways, and Beaudesert.

RADNORSHIRE AND WEST HEREFORD.—No change. Prospects fair; scent variable. Some litters stolen from the Radnor side of the county, said to have gone to another portion of Herefordshire. Masters in turning down foxes, should be careful in finding out where they come from.

The UNITED PACK go on as last year, and have done well with the cubs. The pack looks like being a very killing one this year.

THE WHEATLAND.—Mr. J. C. Allen has taken the mastership, with Mr. Friend as his assistant in the field, and the old pack of hounds. The country is too hard and dry to be rideable, but the farmers are patient, and longing to try their young ones in friendly rivally up to the Brown Clee ills.

SIR WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNN'S.—Goodall has killed plenty of cubs, and had some fair sport, considering the state of the ground. He has no complaints as to the scarcity of foxes. Sir Watkin, to the regret of all, is not likely to take the field himself, but will be ably represented by his nephew and his bride, who are both so keen for sport that the shadow of this celebrated pack is not likely to grow less at present.

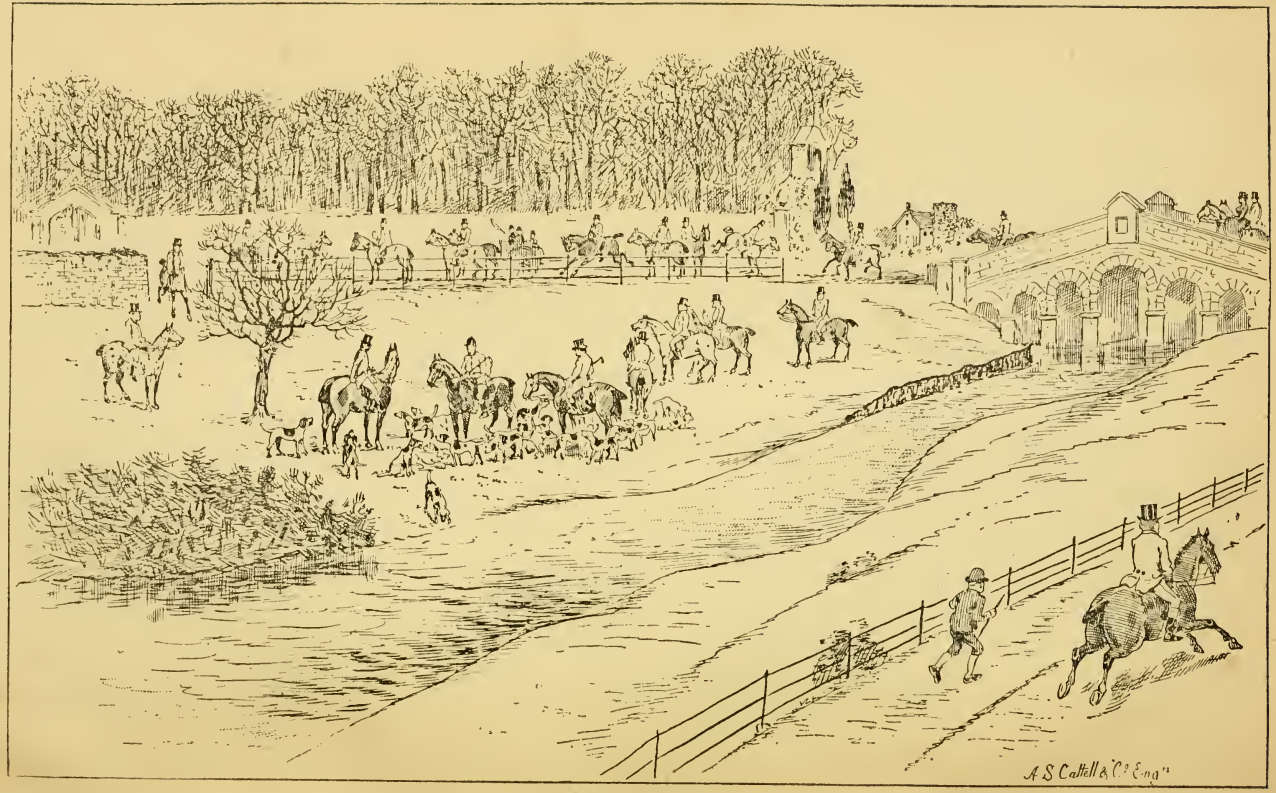
SECOND WEEK, November 4 to 8.

Sunday's rain came in the nick of time, for seldom has a more glorious morning opened a hunting season than that of Monday, the third of November, when nature seemed to be decked in her most gorgeous garment to welcome the Shropshire, under their new mastership, to Hawkestone. How superb that premier seat of the county looked! Its dusky deer, matched by its silver grey and black rabbits, and its grand old fir-topped cliffs at "The Grotto," its lustrous autumn-tinted foliage, its undulating park, its lovely lake, its superb landscape of rich vale, defying the eye to define its limits, and its sweet many-coloured little guinea-pigs which fared sumptuously on the velvet lawn, charms for the gathering sportsmen such as no other piece of grand old English mansion scenery could have exceeded. But, as Jorrocks would have said, "our business is of the chase," and we must perforce trot away with the hounds to the north lodge, and leave these beauteous reflections but half told. It was hardly a representative gathering of Shropshire, for Sir Watkin had rival charms at Rednal to-day. There were some Hills of course, (his lordship an enforced spectator), some Percys, some Cottons, a Corbet, a Sandford, a Rocksavage, a fair contingent from the Whitchurch side, a solitary representative of the county town, and a few farmers, that waited scarce three minutes in the road outside Wyrley Rough for the welcome tallyho that set them all pushing through the narrow covert just in time to see the hounds streaming away over the open in glorious style. Hearts had to be quickly hardened, for the fences looked thick and uninviting, and there was no time for picking places. The second had its votary in one of our best men, and before half a dozen had been negotiated, those with the hounds could be counted on the fingers. Twemlows looked to be our fox's point, when alas, the inevitable stumbling-block, in the shape of a turnip gatherer appeared, and, "tallyho" back was the order of the day. Our fox now became the scarecrow of the rearguard, amid whose shouts he vanished into thin air, and our fun with him for to-day was at an end. On such an amiable day a jog to Losford Gorse was pleasant enough, and when there, hound music soon told us to be on the qui vive, and away went the cigars. He was no lingerer, and crossing to the lower covert broke at the bottom for the brook of such

immortal jumping fame. To tell the truth, it did not look so formidable as in mid-winter. And with fresh horses and light hearts the majority of the field were soon on the right side, some with scrambles and hind legs dangerously poised, but only one regularly collapsing.

He was a water-loving fox, for ere he reached Bletchley village he re-sought the brook, this time close to the hunting bridge, only after having tempted his foremost pursuers to follow him over it; and, one field higher, then for the third time he crossed it, and put their jumping powers to a test ere he vanished (we fancy into a sandpit earth), close to the village—for we cast for him in vain Cloverley way. Bar the fun of the Losford brook this was a poor hunt, and when the orders were given for Losford covert, as a second call, there were many grave faces at the scenting prospects of the day. So much for the fallacy of prognostications!—a fox was not long in showing himself to be at home. This time he broke away at the top, and swinging to the left, crossed the road near some farm buildings, where the overpressure of horsemen caused a momentary uneasiness as to his line. This put right, away he spun merrily as if Hodnet was his point, and then, gradually inclining to the right, gave us the benefit of a fine line of grass with big hairy fences that declined to be trifled with. The field, as it invariably does, divided —those on the left included the huntsman, while the right hand division was more select, and as it turned out, most fortunate. An out-lying fox from a marl pit deluded the left hand men, while those on the right were sailing away in Elysian fields, only to be brought to a halt by the park fence at Hawkestone, luckily close to a lodge. On, on flew the hounds, like pigeons, though the park and past the house, up to the rhododendrons above the cliff. Twenty-five minutes of real galloping, and not more than seven enjoying it to the full. Had scent served here he must have fallen a victim, as he dodged about to gain breathing time, and eventually scrambled into a rocky haven near the grotto. By those who saw it this was voted a nice thing.

The afternoon produced still further fun in a spin from the Lower Heath to Soulton Wood, where, as usual of late in cover, scent failed. In fact, we must not expect to have a scent in covert until the leaf is laid by snow, or some heavy downpour.



ATCHAM BRIDGE.

Sir Watkin's, at Rednal, did not equal in their deeds those of Hawkestone. A fox was found and killed at Woodlands, and then there was further skirmishing with another in that neighbourhood, finishing up with a scurry from Grig Hill.

Wednesday at Albrighton, was very propitious, and of foxes plenty. Preston Gubbalds of course produced several, one of which went away to Hardwicke ,in passing which a silly intruder got chopped, without, however, much delaying the run, which ended in a ring back to the place of departure, where he paid the penalty of his life. In a small covert Pimhill way, two or three more were set going, but the one upon whom the attention of the hounds was bestowed, proved unable to stand up before them long before he too was done to death—a very bloody day.

Thursday was devoted to charity and dancing, and a very brilliant and delightful ball it was. We must leave its description to more devoted lovers of Terpischore than he who wields this pen, merely soliloquising that if Salopians went as fast in the hunting field as they did in the ball room what a cut 'em down lot they would be.

On Friday morning, time-honoured Atcham Bridge was a gathering indeed. Despite the utmost opposition of the elements, it did honour to the county, and must have warmed Mr. Lonsdale's heart. Horse and foot, carriages and coaches, they poured forth their offerings to the shrine of Diana as profusely as the rain poured down its torrents upon them. Attingham coverts and park gave a responsive call to to the multitude, in the shape of at at least three foxes, and all honour to Lord Berwick for his support to the good old cause of fox-hunting in his native county. No. 1 soon made himself scarce; No. 2 was prettily found in an island of osiers just below the private bridge in the park, and kept us well at work for three quarters of an hour round the precincts of the park and grounds, and, when quite on his last legs, managed to save himself by a little diplomacy close to the entrance lodge adjoining Longnor, and I was glad that he was left to fight another battle with the pack, as he showed pluck to-day. The wire netting all round the park is a terrible drawback to a young fox getting away from it.

Longnor, unfortunately, afforded no amusement to-day. Holly Coppice wound up the evening by producing

a fox, who luckily found himself, and, after being headed at the road, when pointing a good line, revenged himself by dashing away to Haughmond Hill, and, assisted by the shades of evening scored a victory there. An unsatisfactory day, when the dimensions of the field and the occasion are brought into consideration. In the open I believe the scent was a racing one, but in covert nil. The latter was the chosen trysting-place of the foxes. Such is life.

On Saturday, "all nature was smiling and gay," and great was the eagerness of sportsmen to wind up the week well. Their choice lay between Carden on the north with Sir Watkin, or Whitbach Lodge on the south with the Ludlow. The majority of course chose the former, and a brilliant day they had—two nice runs over the cream of Cheshire. The first from Carden Cliff to Sandbach, and the second from Royalty Gorse, right into Park Yates' country, and both ending in blood. Would that I had been there to see them, but patience has won kingdoms, and next Saturday I hope to do full justice to this great hunt, as a participator in their glorious fun.

A penchant for old friends took me to Ludlow, and the meet being within a mile, how could it be resisted? Such a nice, level, short-legged, charming pack of hounds (the bitches) clustered round the new huntsman, Johnson, that had I not known what a first-rate hound-man the master, Mr. C. W. Wicksted, was, I should have marvelled at their excellence. From far and near came genuine men who stick together like true sportmen, until there was more than an average field. Not the least interesting member of which was almost the earliest comer, and often, I understand, the last to turn homewards, he proudly boasts of one hundred and ten years as the joint ages of himself and his grey mare. A spinney close to the woods of Henley Hall at once found us a fox, that broke boldly without hesitation in full view of everybody. A prettier, fairer start no man could have wished for, and away we went in full swing straight for Caynham Camp (the best line), but scarce a mile had we gone, and began to shake nicely into our places, than the inevitable turnip-gatherer turned him from his purpose, and he swung to the left, setting his head straight for the Titterstone Clee Hill. The right hand men had to come outside the circle, and there were many sighing gees before the actual hill was reached, and

the streaming pack were seen to go right over its conical summit. only to circuit back again into the main earths in the Stones. Fast enough for anything, a trifle under half-an-hour, and not a semblance of a check. A turn of our horse's head to the wind, and such a panorama as even the Wrekin could not excel, met our delighted gaze. The afternoon at Caynham Camp I was obliged to miss, as trains must be caught—of one thing, however, I took accurate bearings, and that is that the Ludlow are in good form this year, and will be heard of to advantage again before long.

Three letters reach me this morning of the red letter day on Saturday with the Ludlow after I left. The identical spinney—all honour to Mr. Wood—produced a second fox, that took them again straight to the Stones to ground. Caynham Camp produced a clipper that took them at a cracking pace by Maggoty Hill and Knowbury, across the road to Whitton Court and Hope Court, to the Knowle, then for the Court of Hill and Corley Coppice, where he faced again for the hill, by Dorrington Church, across the Titterstone below the Stones, to the Three Horse Shoes and Loughton, nearly reaching Burwarton, when darkness compelled a surrender on the part of the pursuers. Two and a half hours—a splendid run, as those who know the country will testify—foxes must have been changed somewhere by the Knowle.

"A fig for your Leicestershire swells,
While Wicksted such sport can ensure."

THIRD WEEK, November 11 to 16.

Somehow or other it was impossible to get up any excitement over Shrewsbury races this year. By a process of inanition since Mr. John Frail's days, this once popular and aristocratic gathering has slowly snuffed itself out. Messrs. Frail, the present lessees, had a godsend in the Royal Agricultural Show, which paid them two years' rent for a short occupancy, and now they have taken the goodwill of the meeting, so to say, in the days of fixture, to Northampton for next year. If Shrewsbury races are to be revived, the course must be fenced in and made a gate-money venture. The rent, about £400 a year,

is not preventative, but a leading spirit is wanting, and the Shrewsbury of to-day is certainly not keen upon racing. It is not, however, without a pang, that we bid adieu to a meeting that has enjoyed more than a century of prosperity, and where many a proud Salopian sportsman has rejoiced to see his colours successful. Two good sportsmen carried off the chief honours of the two days, in the Duke of Beaufort and Mr. Jardine—the former deserved success, for he has been provokingly often in the second and third place with his useful little team, and I was not unprepared for Mr. Jardine's success with Springbok, of whose opponents Edward would have been most dangerous had he not blundered round the top turn, much in the same way that Tonans did last year at the same place.

And now to hunting.

It has not been a great week's sport, although pleasant in weather, and up to the average of our early November chronicle. Monday, at Ellerton, lay too wide for many habitués of the Shrewsbury side to reach. A catchy scent in cover hindered sport, and it was with difficulty that Thatcher managed to own his fox as far as Colehurst Wood. In the afternoon, they ran Market Drayton way, to Mr. Tayleur's at Buntingsdale, and killed him at Pell Wall. Tuesday at Wrenbury, Mr. Corbet provided plenty of sport. The first fox, from Court's Gorse, went to Combermere, where the usual changes were rung among the denizens of Lord Combermere's foxy preserves. One from Cocked Hat Wood gave them a very fast gallop of about fifteen minutes, when he yielded his brush. In the afternoon from Hewitt's Gorse they had a very enjoyable—an almost brilliant—forty-five minutes, and killed him close to Court's Gorse, the opening scene of the morning, making a very fair day's sport.

Thursday, at Pitchford, was a nice hunting day, but extremely foxless, until half-past three in the afternoon. It should be mentioned, however, that Colonel Cotes had shot his coverts only a few days before, and, of course, thoroughly disturbed them, before he knew of the meet, and had written to Mr. Lonsdale to inform him of it, but too late to prevent the fixture. A very sharp burst from Preston Gorse to Netherwood was the only result of the day's proceedings, and here only two were lucky enough to get away with the hounds, and see the fun, the rest being

scattered in a stern chase. A good wild fox probably pursued the even tenour of his way to the Edge Wood, unharmed, beyond Netherwood.

Friday brought a big gathering to the Fifth Milestone, on the Baschurch road, including a good contingent from Sir Watkin's, who could not restrain a compliment to Thatcher on the splendid appearance of his pack. The Leaton coverts, as usual, produced a plentiful supply of foxes, upon whom the attention of the pack were kept for a long time without eliciting a run in the open. And it was not until two o'clock, that a move was made for Hencot Pool, from a little gorse close to which, a straight-necked one put in an appearance, and the hounds getting away at his brush, a sweet gallop resulted to the Birchy Moor, near Albrighton Hall. Fine flat fields, fair fences, and a flinging away of halting propensities, made only too sadly short by the cry of "Gone to ground," when Pimhill and other nice places in the front were beginning to be reckoned upon as the possible points of the run, and "home" was the word.

Saturday, at Whitchurch, as usual, drew together a monster throng from Shropshire and Cheshire. The morning with its touch of east wind sharpened the wits if not the nerves of the majority. First came a parade of Whitchurch, of which every inhabitant, from ten to fourscore, rushed out to be a spectator. At Hinton, Sir Watkin, in his brougham, gladdened us all by putting in an appearance. The first spinney drawn, Hinton Gorse, produced a fox, that ran into the jaws of the pack in less than five minutes. Three judicious cracks of the whip, before hounds are thrown into a small spinney such as this, would surely be wise, just to awake him to the reality of coming events, before the crash of hounds is upon him. Here, however, two or three could well be spared, so thoroughly are they preserved. No. 2 was awake and away ere half the hounds were in the cover, and a pretty start we made up to the top of the hill, and then down to the Hall, circling back to a drain at some farm buildings after a few minutes' scurry. No. 3 was being hallaoed on the higher ground towards Wirswall at the same time, and he eventually went down the hill towards Quoiseley, and then to the left down to the canal, which he crossed, and the majority of the field went hither and thither to a bridge. Some got as far as Maesfen. Not

so the fox, who dodged back over the Canal for his home quar ers, and was lost Hinton way. Peel's Gorse was our next haunt, and, as usual, produced a plethora of the desired animal. According to custom, too, there were several false starts, until at last the pack came out, and settled on one going down Whitchurch way, that dropped down across the railway, and looked likely to give us a gallop, but he was a home-sick brute, and circling back by a small Moss, with the pack almost in the same field with him, only just managed to work his way through troops of shouting foot-people to Peel's Gorse, and cheat the hounds of a meat in its almost impenetrable recesses. Sir Watkin, still present on wheels, from which he had se n much fun, then gave the order for Os Mere. There, some salutary crackings of whips were decidedly judicious on the railway side, as they awoke up a brace of foxes, which made tracks at once, as if for Ash. The hounds settled on one of them merrily, and, skirting the far side of the Mere, we were obliged to put our best leg foremost to be with them down to Combermere; disdaining, however, the big covert by the lake, our fox turned left-handed, skirted the park, and then dipped down the valley parallel with the railway, honnds pushing along gloriously, until another left-handed turn brought us to the railway, not far from Wrenbury Station. Cleverly handled over the line, we were now in full swing towards the brook, which the hounds did not cross, however, but raced merrily alongside of it on the grass, right up the Cheshire vale as if Marbury Moss was his point. The hounds hesitated after another mile or so, and Goodall took it into his head that an Os Mere fox must necessarily work towards home, and so persisted in holding them towards the railway again. I venture to think the fox held on his course—at all events, his line had not been recovered when I remembered that the 4 p.m. train had to be caught, and was obliged to turn homewards. The last gallop, the cream of which lasted about thirty minutes to the Wrenbury brook, had redeemed the day from decided mediocrity. But I must fain confess that Goodall's powers as a huntsman, when called into requisition at a critical point in a run, are not of the "born huntsman" character. His friends say he has improved, to which I will add, "There is room for more."

By the way, a curious episode reaches me from the Welsh border. Colonel Price, with the Radnorshire, ran a fox fron Stanner last week, that was so hardly pressed that he ran into Dolhir Station, but before he could take his ticket for the next train, the pack succeeded in despatching him to the place of their own choice. Some wag was heard to say that it was fortunate this would be passsenger had not succeeded in emigrating, for he would have taken with him into England such a woeful account of Colonel Price's persecutions to foxdom generally, that visiting relations from England would-have been entirely prohibited, and many a West Hereford gallop would have been nipped in the bud.

FOURTH WEEK—November 17 to 22.

A correspondent in a contemporary asks if Shrewsbury races are really to be a thing of the past. This, as I said last week, depends on the people of Shrewsbury. It may, however, be only right to say that there is a difficulty in renewing the lease of the straight mile, but as a recreation ground the enclosed space of the round course would be likely to pay well. Cricket, football, a bicycle and a pedestrian track, an exercise ground for horses, a lawn-tennis ground, and a general recreation ground combined, would be of the greatest benefit to Shrewsbury, and would pay well. I know a gentleman who pays largely for the right of exercising his horses on turf near the town, and many would gladly avail themselves of such a privilege, paying three guineas a year for it. This needs only an enterprising and trustworthy man to take it in hand with success. Cannot our good old town produce such a Simon Pure? If not, the old course and its surroundings must be handed over to the ruthless hands of the builders, or be let in butchers' plocks.

Of hunting matters I have a fair budget, albeit rain is sadly wanting before great or exciting sport can be had.

On Monday, the Shropshire and Sir Watkin competed for patronage—the former at the Kennels, and the latter at Baschurch. Both held full levées, but the latter carried off all the honours. If, in the present dry state of the atmosphere, one place is more suitable than another for holding a scent, it is the fen-like land lying east of the

Great Western Railway at Baschurch. Here Sir Watkin, personally superintending his pack from his brougham, gave orders for the day's fun to commence. Stanwardine Gorse was the first place of call, and no sooner were the hounds thrown in than there was a crash of music that rattled round the covert for nearly a quarter of an hour before the fox found the exigency of the situation necessitated a speedy departure. That done, there was a desperate stampede over the watery country towards Ellesmere, that gave men, horses, and hounds plenty of employment until the White Mere was skirted, and Oteley appeared to be the intended haven, but, turning back, he managed to evade his pursuers near Welshampton, after a very enjoyable run. Back towards Baschurch was again the order, where Sir Watkin had in the meantime had certain intelligence of a fox in a drain, just opposite a public-house, so that thirsty sportsmen took a *drain* at the barrel, while a terrier tried the foxey drain. The latter poured forth quickly a double potion in a brace of foxes, and amid dire confusion, Goodall and his pack chased one of them pell-mell to Petton, where he unaccountably made himself scarce in the shrubberies. Foiled here, some neighbouring coverts near the railway towards Marton were tried, and what proved to be a gallant fox was found. After making a feint on one side to break, he eventually got away to the east, thereby giving many of the field a bad start. Petton seemed to be his point, skirting which, he went straight to Broughton Gorse, over a very severe line—black, boggy ditches predominating—and great was the grief, and much the fun, of the chase. One gallant young sportsman, whose name betokens a fondness for water, charged boldly at 18 feet of water, and, his horse not being similarly minded, the rider indulged in a solitary header. Goodall showed himself a fine horseman by getting clear over. The way in which certain wide boggy ditches were perambulated to find a sound take-off was charming, hounds all the time running merrily past Broughton, and then, describing a circle back by Snape Gorse, nearly to Wem, and by Petton to Broughton again, where Goodall was fain to leave him, being in the Shropshire country. All had had enough—one hour and twenty minutes. Undoubtedly the best day of the season so far.

I nearly forgot to say that the Shropshire never smelt

a fox till they arrived at Shawbury Heath, when they ran up to Acton Reynald, but could do nothing on that dry side of the country. A very poor day.

On Wednesday the Shropshire were at Loton Park, where Sir Baldwyn Leighton had purposely stayed at home to meet them, and was exceedingly keen to show them foxes. This he succeeded in doing in a nice covert in the lower country south of the park. Scent was miserable in the covert, and had the fox been a stay-at-home gentleman the hounds could never have hunted at all. As it was, he made tracks quickly for the big wood, above the turnpike road, and thence into the park, back to the aforesaid big wood, and then into the top of the park, to ground in a rabbit burrow under shelving rock, where he could barely squeeze himself out of sight. Picks and spades soon obliged him to bolt. A quick scurry in view, and he was rolled over at the bottom of the park, trying to scale the wall. This was not a solitary fox at Loton, as another fox was viewed out of covert. Rowton had just been shot, so that Mr. Shaw could hardly have been expected to show us a fox, but Bickley Wood was not long in doing justice to its wonted reputation—the property of a quondam master. A good fox, too, for he very quickly quitted his snug quarters, and, crossing the Holyhead Road, went a good line just above Preston Montford, hounds settling on him nicely up to the road opposite Onslow. When, *O misereri mei*, just as we were beginning to think of riding, and two or three awkward fences had been crossed, the word went forth, "Get forward, Harry, my orders are not to let them cross the road into Onslow." There was a long blast of the horn, the whip went crack in the very teeth of the scent, and our fun for to-day was over. The Onslow coverts were to be shot next week, so they were not to be disturbed. It might very properly be optional in owners to decline to have their coverts drawn betore they are shot, provided this prohibition does not extend beyond the month of November or half of December. In no case, however, should hounds be whipped off in full cry. We speak in perfect good humour, and in the hope of finding a happy solution to this delicate problem.

Friday at Stanford Bridge was on the extreme boundary of the country, near Newport, and I am fain to admit that not a whisper of its doings has yet reached me.

Saturday Sir Watkin was at the old racecourse, Whitchurch. A fine frosty morning, and there was the same large cavalcade of welcome that usually does honour to this fixture. Two M.F.H's., Mr. Reginald Corbet and Mr. Lonsdale, came to congratulate Sir Watkin on his improved health. Sandford Pool, a long trot through Shropshire country, curiously enough, past the Twemlows, was our first draw, nor did it keep us long in suspense. A fox was away over the high pastures, and hounds set to work to run with a will for about fifteen minutes. What a glorious sight it was to see the galaxy of beauty, two hundred men and women all sailing away to their heart's delight over a line of grass, as if the ocean would not stop them. A late comer, with a wide berth on the left had ample scope for a bird's eye view of the hounds and the bulk of the field below him. Two or three riderless horses were careering before we reached the osier bed near Cloverley, where hounds threw up, ane Goodall held them on by the pool in vain. It looked a horse to a hen against his hitting him off, when a timely holloa near the Lodge Gates put us all agoing again, and hounds settled merrily to work over the big fields that soon brought us nearly to Twemlow, turning short, from which he began to run short, and was caught handsomely in the open in a small enclosure before he could get back to Sandford Pool. Without being brilliant, this run had kept us in exercise. Flasks and sandwiches, then another call at Sandford Pool, without a response, then a couple of spinneys were interviewed en route for Cloverley big wood. This was carefully drawn without a whimper, and Goodall had got his hounds nearly to the gorse, when there was a tallyho back in the corner of the covert. Hounds, however, could make nothing of it, and scent under dry fallen oak leaves was simply nil. A fox had evidently entered Cloverley Gorse before the hounds, and they spoke to him the moment they entered. Had he been a good one he would have made tracks at once, instead of which he hung about with the pack at his brush for some minutes, and at last made a dash for Ightfield. For a few fields it looked like a gallop, but headed, we were soon at Cloverley big wood again, and back to the Gorse. Here he or another indulged the field with a pretty little ring to-wards Sandford and back to Cloverley, where he might as well have been under-

ground for all the scent he gave, and the day was over. Let us hope it was only a prelude to a better.

A melancholy story reaches me of vulpicidism, south of the Severn, but I hesitated to publish it without due inquiry. One thing, dear reader, you may be pleased to hear, and that is, that it has not been laid at the door of a Salopian, but merely at that of a shooting gentleman and his keeper.

FIFTH WEEK—November 22 to 29.

The racing season is over, and Mr. Hammond comes out as the great winner of the year, with a total of £12,379 to his credit. Mr. Peck, the trainer is second, with £11,906, and the Duke of Westminster and Mr. Manton third and fourth—both in the £11,000 category. It has been essentially a commoner's year and a disastrous one for backers as a rule. I may be a false prophet, but to the ideas of not a few, racing is drifting away from its ancient moorings, and instead of being the national pastime of twenty years back, it is becoming every year more a professional business—the old county gatherings are no more. Local interest in racing generally is fading away, except to those who bet at the lists, or can enjoy Epsom, Ascot, and Goodwood, in their season.

Our hunting budget this week is by no means meagre one.

On Monday, Sir Watkin and Mr. Lonsdale as usual, competed. This time, it was the latter's turn to win the game, and right well he did it. Coton Hall failed to produce a fox, but Twemlow held a plethora—a brace of stay-at-home received their quietus, afrer a ring or two in covert, but the third was made of quite different stuff. Across Whichurch old racecourse, and over the L & N.W. Railway to Coton, was his first move, then, swinging round, he recrossed the railway, and skirting Prees, gave his followers a taste of as stiff a jumping country as he could have found towards Soulton Wood, leaving which to the right, he worked his way gallantly back to the Twemlow, and baffled his pursuers. A capital hour and twenty minutes. An afternoon fox from a pit-hole below Ightfield was also equal to the occassion. Straight to and through the Twemlow, and from thence to Prees, where he described a ring, and eventually got to ground in a rabbit hole,

when the bitches were screaming for his blood, at a quarter to five in the evening, ending a first rate day's sport.

Sir Watkin's, at Rednal, drew a large field. Their first fox was overtaken in his slumbers in Sandford Pool, which did not astonish me, seeing what happened at Hinton and elsewhere. The second at Grafton Gorse at once went to ground, as did a bad one from Nesscliff. The Grafton fox having been unearthed, refused to show sport, and tried in vain the shelter of a hay loft. A miserably disappointing day. Sir Watkin, however, hear, had a grand run from near Wrexham last week, in which the Dee was crossed, and Saighton Gorse, in Cheshire, was the finale, the fox getting to ground there, and saving his brush for another day.

On Tuesday, Mr. Corbet did not put in an appearance at Wrenbury, much to the disappointment of a large number of men who hunt here by rail.

Wednesday with the Shropshire at Lythwood was a real hunting morning, and the gathering betokened a remembrance of the great run from here to the Stretton Hills this time last year. Mr. Hulton-Harrop cheered us by cherry brandy, but to his woeful disappointment not a vestige of a fox was at home. The Bomere and Condover coverts being now solely devoted to pheasants, were, of course, a sealed book to us, so there was nothing for it but to drop down to the Day-house Spinnies, and failing these to go on to Hanwood, where some splendid lying was diligently searched, as vainly as the Quarry gardens would have been. It is sad indeed to have such an unvaried tale of disaster to fox-hunting to tell of on this side of the country, but what is the use of hiding the truth? What must that excellent ex-M.F.H., sportsman, and politician, Colonel Corbett, think of his tenant at Longnor, Mr. Chamberlain, when he knows that he not only himself shot a fox last week, but allowed his keepers and beaters to knock another's brains out?—when entangled in a net, I suppose? Let us pray that Birmingham may soon receive him into its bosom again, never to return to Shropshire. Happily, there is a brighter page with which to conclude, and one that will assist to wipe out the shadow of Wednesday. Haughmond Abbey is always lovely and picturesque. It never loomed us more grandly than with the brilliant



A WATERY EPISODE—THE TERN.

colours of horsemen and hounds circling in the foreground. Close by, too, was the counter atraction of Sundorne Coursing Meeting—so near in fact, that the sports seemed in danger of blending. Thatcher's pretty bitches were quite aware that there was something up in the adjoining field, and threw up their heads, and lashed their sterns, as the "too-too" was shouted, and the judge raced after his greyhounds.

The master gave the word for the Sundorne coverts, which were drawn in a circle from the outside, so as not to disturb the coursing, but were thoroughly irresponsive to-day. Holly Coppice was the word, and our hopes grew higher. Scarce half the covert had been drawn before "Tallyho" at the lower end set us going, and we crossed the High Ercall road as if for Poynton Springs. It was only a feint, however, for hugging a narrow plantation by the roadside, we were soon back over the road, and into Haughmond Hill, past the Tower, and gradually dropping down the hill at the back of Uffington. Those who stuck to the proverbial hill-running propensities of the Haughmond foxes, were thunderstruck at seeing the pack streaming like pigeons across the fields below. Great was the charge of cavalry down that grassy hill, and desperate were the varied attempts of the big field at chosen angles to cut in with the line of chase. I need not draw on your imagination—my readers know well those good square fields of grass and light plough, which border on Upton Magna, and can appreciate the delight of crossing them, as we did, without a moment's check or hindrance. On through Withington village, and over the canal the bitches still merrily kept ahead, until they came to the river Tern, close to the withy bed. More than a majority of us wished for a *turn* here, but alas, into it they went, and dismay seemed to seize on the pursuers for the next few minutes. Some went to the left for Walcot bridge, others to the right to the Forge ford. A few tried the watery element with varied success. Two only got through *with* their horses, while two more performed certain gymnastic watery tricks, and landed on different sides to their horses. The next precious ten minutes after crossing the Shropshire Union Railway could only be described by the fortunate couple that held on the line. Just before reaching Charlton there was a slight check, which led up Harry the whip from the left,

and right well he performed as huntsman, carefully and yet quickly holding them on the line, and keeping us going at a slower pace over the main road to Wellington, and down into the last dip before the foot of the Wrekin is reached. There stood its great wooded side, dark and uninviting, within a few fields of us, and how our hearts sank to think that probably our fox must gain its safety. Aston was passed on the right, and the bitches seemed to take heart. In the next field there was a view holloa What a galvanic shock did that rustic's holloa give us! Up went he bitches' bristles, and we found that the jumping-powder was not all out of us. Ah, he had turned his head from home for the last time. All that could happen now was a scurry and a worry, and this gallant Wrekin fox was numbered with the slain, close to Burcot. The best watch told us that the run had lasted one hour and thirteen minutes, an eight-mile point as the crow flies, and quite ten as we ran it. Scarce a score of our big field were there to share the triumph, and Thatcher just saved his bacon by getting up in the last two fields. Two ladies, to their honour be it said, were there too. Sportswomen such as they are scarce in any county, and Shropshire has need to be proud of them. "Good wine needs no bush," or we could sing far longer and nobler pæans to the glory of this great Haughmond Abbey day, not forgetting to thank Mr. Corbet for preserving the true animal in Holly Coppice.

———

SIXTH WEEK—December 1 to 6.

I see that the Hackney Society have started a proposal to have a show for hunter sires in March in London, when big prizes will be offered. If this system were extended to many horse-breeding counties, it would be of undoubted benefit. Shropshire should imitate the example of Suffolk, where, at the end of March, there is an established show for Sires in the county—thoroughbreds, roadsters, coachers, and cart-horses. It has proved a great success, and is entirely self-supporting. Here would be another useful purpose for our old race

ground, and probably the West Midland Show would take advantage of it in 1886.

My hunting budget is again a full one, although the week opened with frost and snow, and spoilt the expectations of Baschurch on Monday.

To begin with, I am anxious to find a good excuse for our blank day at Lythwood. It seems that the earths on Lyth Hill were not stopped. The Condover keeper, who had been in the habit of doing this work, had been discharged, and his successor did not know that it was part of his duties. The earth is well used. The earths at Hanwood were also open. This is a weak place in our armour, which Thatcher, the huntsman, should look after.

On Saturday, the 28th of November, from Iscoyd, Sir Watkin had a first rate run over an unexpected country, by Maesfen, through some black peaty lands towards Norbury, and leaving Cholmondeley on the left, went on straight to Wrenbury Moss to ground. This was a fine line.

On Tuesday, December 2nd, Mr. Corbet was the only master who took the field, and with a few attendants had a poor day in the Burleydam country.

Wednesday found the Shropshire at Onslow, where only a small field turned up. There were plenty of creature comforts for those who required them, and foxes plentiful. A brace were soon disposed of in covert, (one killed and the other run to ground). A good fox, however, was found later in the day, in a small covert near Ford village, alongside the disused Potteries Railway. A very fast fifteen minutes' run resulted, over the railway, and on by Preston Montford nearly to Bickley Wood, where hounds threw up, and his line was not recovered, the probability being that he had slipped back to Preston Montford. Bickley Wood failed, and there was nothing for it but home.

Friday the 5th, had duplicate attractions in Walford Hall and Aldersey Village. Both had some sport to boast of. Mr. Eyton was very keen to show us a fox from his spinney by the side of the Perry, but he was not at home, nor was he in the small coverts west of the Great Western Railway. Directly, however, Thatcher tried Merrington Wood, things assumed a merrier hue. Breaking at once to the south, it

momentarily looked as if Leaton was to be his point; but he had better intentions, and hounds settled prettily on the grass for Pimhill. When within a field of it, however, after several nice little fences had been negotiated, he swung short to the right, and crossed the road nearly to Bomere Heath; then left-handed again as if for Birchy Moor. Hounds were brought to their noses on some foiled ground, and could not carry much head, when he bore to the left still more, and entered Preston Gubbalds. Scent improving in covert, he was soon driven through, pointing for Grinshill; but, headed on the road, he once more swung back to the Gubbalds. Here they soon forced him or another away in a similar direction, but he declined crossing the London and North-Western Railway, and ran down nearly to Hadnal Station, describing a circle back again, and just saving his brush in a rabbit hole, close to Albrighton Hall. The whole run had kept us going for an hour and twenty minutes—forty minutes up to Preston Gubbalds—which all who cared for the fun could enjoy. Middle Park, in the afternoon, did not provide a fox, though one was believed to be underground there.

Sir Watkin's at Aldersey, wasted the morning after a fox that went to the hills. In the afternoon, from Royalty, they had a screaming twenty minutes with a ringing fox, over a clipping country, and then they rolled him over in the open.

Saturday opened as balmy as May, such a hunting day as we seldom see in December, and such a throng of eager sportsmen and sportswomen as met Sir Watkin at Whitchurch has not been seen this season. Ash Wood, our first draw, is a favoured spot—plenty of room here for a galloping crowd, and few there were to-day but intended going wherever it willed that hounds should take them. Of course, Ash had foxey tenants, but they were not in a hurry to leave. The best end was left well open to them, but at last one chose the north, and away went the two-hundred in terrific array, pent up at starting by an impossible corner, and a rara avis, a ploughed field. Then came a separation, and the hounds bent to the right, and settled on their fox in earnest, racing into Combermere by the lodge, with the majority of the non-



SIR WATKIN.

riding division meeting them there. Through the park the fox was scarcely out of view, the foremost of the field viewing him as he went to the lower end of the big lake, and into the plantations beyond. Forced into the open at the end of the park, he bore short to the right, and in a few fields was at Burleydam, where, in sheer despair, he jumped into a barn, and then into the hounds' mouths. A big fine fox, but too fat for such a cracking pace on so hot a morning—thirty minutes. Trotting back towards Ash, we arrived at Colonel Rivers Bulkeley's, where the hounds were thrown into a round spinney not larger than his kitchen garden, and yet as thick as Erebus, and in as good keeping. Whips were well cracked, and at last there was a whimper, followed by the exposé of a fine fox, going full sail in front of the house. Again, great was the charge of cavalry, right though that good sportsman's stableyard, and down over the meadows for Ash. Not to enter it, however, wonderful to say, but running parallel a couple of fields away. It was perfect steeplechasing for those who tried to live with the hounds, and fences of every description had to be negotiated full swing, as the hounds bore still more to the right short of Ash Village, and crossed the main road near to the chapel. Peel's Gorse now seemed our fox's point, but before reaching Osmere he bore again to the right, and dashing into Combermere, lay down in the first withy bed he could find, after bringing us a most exciting, and racing burst of thirty minutes or thereabouts, that had told tales on our horses. Here Goodall had left him, and was hanging on a stale line by the side of the drive, when one of the whips saw him steal away, and we were once more after him at the top of the park, across the road and railway, and down into Marley Moss, where he tried the ambush game with less success, and was caught, ending a very pretty run satisfactorily. Foxes were going in every direction in the Moss, much to Mr. Corbet's chagrin, as we were in Cheshire county, and he was reckoning upon Marley Moss for his next Tuesday's run. Hounds were, however, eventually stopped, and the word given for Ash once more. Alas, the day ended not as it had been begun. The noted little withy bed was true to its traditions, and held a fox—only to

be worried in its kennel, and to afford us no run.

This deponent can say no more of the day, as the four p.m. train waits not even for foxhunters. I can truly say, however, that this was the Whitchurch's best day thus far; plenty of scent, splendid going, and foxes, if not very strong, fairly good performers for this time of year.

Next week the Shropshire ought to have sport, for their meets are good ones, and the hounds are in excellent form. That bitch pack is worth a Jew's eye!

SEVENTH WEEK—December 8 to 13.

The turf world is feeding on dry statistics, like squirrels over their winter stores. Busybody is at the head of the poll for the year, with winnings amounting to upwards of £6,400; next to her comes The Lambkin with £5,300, and St. Gatien third with £4,900, Scot Free fourth with £4,700. Cherry, Harvester, Cambuscan, Sandiway and St. Simon being ahead of the rest in the order named. Toastmaster is first among the aged horses. Tristan, of course, heads the six-year-olds, Geheimniss the five-year-olds, and Florence the four-year-olds, with £5,400 to her credit, beating Energy, who is second, by more than a thousand.

The Grand National Hunt Committee has fixed upon Lincoln for the scene of their Spring Steeplechases, and the Jockey Club has been employing its leisure in issuing a circular calling roundly to task the jockeys who are owners of horses, as well as flagellating them for their betting transactions. They have also gone so far as to prohibit Mr. Baird, better known as Mr. Abingdon, from training horses on Newmarket Heath. This is a strong measure, seeing that he has just taken a lease of Bedford Lodge stables and ground for £1,800 a year, and won some big races. The ostensible reason given is that Mr. Baird had continued to run horses in other people's names while under the ban of the Jockey Club The latter, however, must have known this at the time, as the outside world did, and should not have reinstated

him as an owner of racehorses unless they intended to thoroughly forgive him. Mr. Abingdon will now owe them a heavy grudge. All the racing world, Jockey Club included, has long known of the jockeys' delinquencies complained of in the circular. To further attempt their repression by threats will only place a thicker veil over them, and make them more dangerous. The ring men are really masters of the situation in these degenerate days of the turf, and just in proportion as honest owners of racehorses fall off, so much the more must they create dummy owners to deceive the public with; and jockeys' money to them is as sweet as other people's. By far the wiser course, in my opinion, would be to make it obligatory on every trainer or jockey who owns even a hair in a horse's tail, to run that horse in his own name. We should know then openly what we were doing, and those who employed such interested people would know what they were about. It would open the profession to fresh aspirants, and honest men would have a chance. I do not believe in repression. It has failed to put down Nihilism. The turf is sick, and wants fresh air.

Let us breathe the purer atmosphere of the hunting-field. To begin with, I must hark back to Saturday week, when that inopportune worry in Ash Withybed sent me back to Whitchurch, sore at heart. Ash Wood, in its remotest corner, it seems, had a redeeming feature —a fox with a strong mind, that soon put some big pastures, Shavington way, between himself and the pack, and a splendid gallop resulted over a line not excelled in any country—four miles to the wall—like pigeons—through the Park to Adderley, and then, with the aid of an empty stomach, he managed to circle back viâ Wilkesley, and gain Ash, 150 yards in front of the leading hound. A proud performance that gave him his life and reputation. He had dusted his opponents for more than an hour, over eleven miles of country, which only men with second horses could give an account of. Sir Watkin will be lucky if a better day is recounted this season.*

Monday at Loppington is not a long story. A brace were at home at Broughton Gorse, one of which slipped across the railway for Besford Hill, and was soon lost. Preston Spirngs was the home of another, who, after much persuasion, crossed the Roden, and went to Soulton Wood,

* A fox, believed to be this one, was found dead two fields on the other side of Ash Wood, a few days after this great run.

and then to the Lower Heath and was lost—not an exciting day.

Tuesday. By way of changing the venue, Borderer found himself in South Herefordshire, at Abbeydore Court. Captain Freke Lewis hunts his own hounds, while his partner Mr. Harold Helme, keeps watch over the field. A wolfish-looking fox was at once found in Gilbert's Hill that defied the pack from morn till night. Your readers would be little the wiser at hearing the country we traversed. It will suffice, therefore, to say that Newbarns and Whitfield were visited, then Gilbert's Hill again, and out towards Whitfield; then over the Hereford and Abergavenny Railway, nearly to Kenchurch, back to Pontrilas, and then, treading every dingle and difficulty he could discver, brought us at 4-30 p.m., to St. Devereux Station, where, in a spinney, we had to leave him quite beaten—a tiring day for all. The hounds hunted steadily and perseveringly throughout, and the master showed a patient knowledge of his work that will ensure him sport before the season is much older.

On Wednesday, the Shropshire met at Wroxeter Ruins. On the same day, the Roman Hounds threw off among the ruins on the Campagna! Perhaps here the similarity ends, for the latter had no Attingham to draw, and no worthy like Lord Berwick to find them a good fox in his laurels. Those who went to enjoy a gallop round the Park, after the cub-hunting fashion of their last day, were quickly out of their reckoning, for to-day the scene was changed, and that speedily, for quitting the Park, our fox put his head straight for the Wrekin, and, for the second time this season, this fine bit of country was enjoyed. The pace was not first-rate, yet Thatcher managed to hunt him prettily, not only up to the wood, but right over its top, to ground on the other side, which part of the performance few cared to see, since climbing hills is not a strong point in a modern Shropshire field's tactics.

Friday, with the Shropshire, at High Ercall, is always a big gathering—the country good, and the meet popular. A nice hunting day, too, but the one desideratum was wanting—a fox. The Marle, Rowton, and Forester's plantation, all blank. At last, at Rodington, they found one. The hounds got away at his brush, and raced him so hard to the Marle, that all the steam was out of him, and he preferred to die there rather than face the

open again. Poynton Springs produced a ringing beggar that knew no country beyond Shawbury Heath, or, if he did, ventured no further, and was left to learn better ways.

Saturday, at Whitchurch, Sir Watkin had, if anything, a bigger field than ever. How the record of a good day draws, alas! only to deceive. Hinton and Peele's Gorse had been overrun by Mr. Corbet the day before (by way of retaliation, it would almost seem, for our having poached on his country the previous week), so we did not wonder at having a blank draw here. It was sadly too soon to call on Ash again, and yet it had to be done, because there was a shooting party at Cloverley in a few days, and this shut up Styche from us. To be sure there was the account of the brilliant afternoon run of Mr. Corbet's the day before to listen to, while all this fruitless work of drawing was being done. How from Marbury Mere covert they had run straight past Baddily and Ravensmoor Windmill, killing in the open at some place beyond this, of which I failed to get the name, a nine-mile point straight—the run of the season so far—the last part of which the Master nearly missed through getting down. Luckily good and trusty friends were at hand, and a favouring bend put him in his right place again. To return now to our own doings. Brown's Moss of ancient renown was a *dernier resort*. Nothing but a bare common, watery in places, with a stunted gorse bush here and there. Hounds and horsemen had spread themselves over it in vain, Goodall had blown his horn at the far end, when, out of a small half-burnt bush, popped a fox, right among the rear guard of the field. A fine fellow he looked too, as he charged gallantly through them. For a minute or two it was difficult to say who were the leaders of the chase, men or hounds. So mixed and so exciting was the scene that hounds could not settle on him till he took to the fields on the right. Some small enclosures gave them room, and in three minutes we were on Whitchurch Heath, racing away in dangerous proximity with rabbit holes to Twemlows—a turn there, and the fox almost in their jaws. A check, and a rabbit hole, end hopes. A beautiful day condensed into twelve minutes' enjoyment.

EIGHTH WEEK—December 15 to 20.

My budget is condensed into one run. Stapleton Village, on Wednesday, welcomed the Shropshire, but all the coverts thereabouts, including Netley and Lyth Hill, failed to produce a fox. Bomere was a last resort. It had not held a fox this season, and many a long sigh was heard as each likely side was drawn, and still no sign of a fox. Thatcher had raised his horn, and was actually beginning to blow a final blast, proclaiming the day a blank one, when our old red-coated runner, in a short cut for home, stumbled upon a fox curled up in a bush. "Tally-ho!" shouted he, with his best lungs, and back rushed the pack. For a moment he was in the middle of them—in the next he was away for Betton, and the hounds in the same field with him. With such a start, how could there fail to be high pressure on all sides? Skirting the coppice, he turned short to the right, parallel with the Wenlock road, and crossed the Condover Brook, close to the iron bridge. Then over a sticky line to Cantlop, and leaving the Pitchford coverts on his left, it was a rare treat to see hounds racing away, and a select few doing their level best to be with them. Falls had already thinned them, but a soldier, and one hailing Wroxeter way, were cutting out the work, and the latter did the Pitchford brook gallantly. The line was now near the Brick Kiln, and, leaving Frodesley village on the left, took a straight course to Lawley, where the shades of evening were closing so fast that Thatcher began to blow his horn. Not yet, however, to be denied, on went the flying pack right over the Caradoc, and were with difficulty stopped literally in the dark—52 minutes without check. An eight-mile point, and hounds 22 miles from their kennels, which they did not reach till 10-20 p.m., speaks for itself of the goodness of this wild fox that Bomere had afforded us. There was a vast amount of grief. One who does not usually tumble, being down twice; both the whips had falls, and at least half a dozen others have similar cause to remember the day. One good wild fox like this is worth half a hundred bad ones.

Friday brought nothing but disappointment. Hardwicke Grange is so central that a large field turned up, and everybody knows how keen Mr. Bibby is in the good cause. Still, sometimes it is not for mortals to command

success, and it was, perhaps, some consolation to him to know that his neighbours did no better, for Grinshill, Acton Reynald, and Shawbury shared the same fate. There must be something wrong in the earth-stopping department hereabouts, as I will not believe that this district is foxless.

On Saturday a large field turned up at Whitchurch, only to be condemned to a day in the Fens! Some hitch had occurred about drawing Styche, of which it is difficult to make out the rights. The owners of Styche are waiting to shoot their coverts until the hounds have drawn them, while those at Cloverley adjoining, are closed from an opposite cause, the upshot being that we ran for three fields to Fenn's Bank to ground. Then hunted a miserable little cub in the mazes of the Fens for a few minutes, killed, and went home thinking that the Whitchurch days that we had been accustomed to enjoy were very unlike this one.

NINTH WEEK—December 22 to 27.

Frozen-out foxhunters are certainly a degree better than frozen-out gardeners. The former do not sing quite such doleful ditties as the poor make-believe gardeners do, and yet the sporting historian at Battlefield, on Boxing Day, would have to be blind or deaf to truth and honesty were he not to record a tale of great disappointment. Nothing shows the bent of a people's mind more than its way of employing a holiday. From schoolboy days we know how we looked forward to a set holiday, and decided how we should spend it, according to the truest bent of our mind, and so it was with the Shrewsbury people to-day. They trooped along to Battlefield in their hundreds. The line of carriages reached for a mile on the road, and horsemen might have been counted at more than a hundred; some had come from afar, and all with the certain assurance that hunting would be the business of the day. Eleven-thirty and twelve o'clock came, and yet no Thatcher, no hounds, no message, no hope! Every adjoining field was tried, and pronounced excellent going. Still disappointment reigned supreme, and the Boxing Day of 1884 had to be written down as a

decided sell. I must say that not having sent forward a whip with a message, nor having brought the hounds for exercise, the roads being excellent going, was inexcusable in a well-ordered county like Shropshire, and I hardly wondered at the multitude of bitter words that were uttered against Thatcher on this account. More than this, I will say that hunting at Battlefield was not only feasible, but essentially warrantable had hounds come; at least so said everyone with whom Borderer came in contact.

The week, however, has had its redeeming feature. Wednesday, at Acton Burnell, with more frost in the ground than to-day, the hounds came, much to the delight of Sir Frederick and Lady Smythe, and a very fair field. How beautiful the old ruins looked, with a gleam of sunshine breaking on them about 11-30, and how cheerily we cantered through the park after wishing its good owner a happy Christmas over a nip of sherry, just enough to warm us, and make us cast a hopeful eye on the Park Wood, as we entered it from its lowest end. Hounds worked carefully through it, and had just finished to all appearance their task when there was a holloa towards the Obelisk Plantation; a brace of foxes had gone away, and the hounds immediately settled nicely on one of them that left the Obelisk on his left, pointing for Frodesley. There was evidently a scent, and they ran merrily up the hill to the plantation, through it and slanting still to the right over the next high ground, one other dip, and we were rising again to Plaish Hall, and making up our minds for a good thing. The Vale below was bounded by the Edge Wood, and Longville-in-the-Dale lay in front of us, but, alas for human hopes! Nearer at hand were a couple of hard-frozen ploughed fields that utterly refused to give us any scent. The hounds threw up. The first whip cast them well to the left, but our fox was no doubt forward, and Thatcher appearing on the scene, shook his head at the rattle under his horse's feet and gave it up—twenty-two minutes of really fast going, which, but for this contretemps, might have been a brilliant run. If we could have carried the line for another field or two we might have been on the grass again with nothing to stop us short of the Edge Wood. Pitchford Big Wood, and home, wound up our day.

It is sixty years ago since Nimrod wrote: "After hunting, Sir Bellingham and myself dined at Acton Burnell, which was the fixture for the next morning. This is the fine seat of my very old friend, Sir Edward Smythe, and who hunted Shropshire for six seasons. A more jovial fellow is not to be found in his Majesty's dominions. Though this worthy baronet has plenty of game, he is a strict preserver of foxes, and generally finds a good one. The day I am speaking of did not prove an exception. We found in the park, and after upwards of two hours through a deep and distressing country, lost him by a holloa from a keeper, who thought he had marked him to ground. At the second check, I heard Sir Bellingham say we had been running him an hour and ten minutes, quite enough for the country we went over. I witnessed on this run what I never saw before, viz., three gentlemen riding at gates, and without their horses falling, tumbling over their heads. The trio was composed of Mr. Bryne, a friend of Sir Edward Smythe's, but a native of the sister kingdom; Mr. Rock, a very thrusting young one; and Mr. Mytton! Mr. Bryne, I was told, was determined never to be so served again, as he went to a brook and wetted the knees of his breeches, to enable him to stick to his saddle! I never heard of this experiment before, but, as far as I am a judge, there is only one other step to be taken with the breeches!"

Nimrod also speaks of an excellent run from Pitchford Park of an hour and twenty minutes, when Mr. Mytton and a good field were present, and Sir Bellingham rode a horse of Captain Gordon's that carried him very well. Perhaps history may repeat itself here also! I find two most interesting accounts of Sundorne and the Corbets, of which more anon.

Those were jolly times, that it does a hunting man's heart good to go back to occasionally; and if this frost continues, or if the Shropshire huntsman is disposed to linger longer over his cosy fire, I must fall back on these old stories of Nimrod's, some of which may be half forgotten, or, perhaps, never well enough digested by the present generation. I have something to say, too, by way of advice on the present system of earth-stopping in the county, but it will not do to close the year with one long howl of grumble. We have much to be thank-

ful for, and much that less favoured counties long for in vain. Here's health and happiness, for many a year to come, to "All Round the Wrekin" who do honour to two of the blessings of life, "Horses and Hounds."

TENTH WEEK—December 29 to January 3, 1885.

The renewal of the lease of Shrewsbury race-ground is still an unsettled matter. Here is a fine open space conveniently situated for a population of nearly 30,000 people. Here are the stands and all the other appliances of sport. Adjoining it are the nicest meadows, with perfect fences for steeplechasing, which can, I know, be had for the purpose when required. What is to prevent the formation of a steeplechase, hunt, and general sporting club to rent this ground? A finer natural steeplechase course could not be found anywhere. Shrewsbury is a splendid centre for the purpose. I have already heard of some good supporters of such a scheme as this, and it is one that will win the smiles of the county families once more if properly taken up. In addition to this, an athletic club is being seriously discussed in Shrewsbury, and where could they find a better locale than here, where, without in the least interfering with each other, biped and quadruped could share the galloping ground and contribute to the expense, profit, and amusement of the club and its patrons? It only requires a few able, active, and influential sportsmen to see into this matter, and bring it to a successful termination.

What can I say of hunting while we are smarting under the bite of this "shaving" north-easter? I am told that the Shropshire went to Shawbury on Tuesday, and found in the Old Pool, near Wytheford, running prettily to Ercall, where they either lost or ran to ground. And that again, on Wednesday, they braved the elements (Sir Watkin's did not show up at Ruyton on Tuesday). The Shropshire found a fox at Loton Park—ran him away sharply towards the Breiden, and back to Loton, and killed him in twenty-five minutes—no find Rowton or Bickley way afterwards. I, *cum multis aliis*, stayed at home, thinking hounds would not go, and not relishing a nine-mile ride with disappointment at the end of it. Of course we growled at our own pusillanimity, and swore,

at any risk, that we would go to Leaton Knolls on Friday, but, alas, such a frost as came on Thursday night drove even this last bit of pluck out of us.

All will regret to hear that Thatcher's wife is very ill, and this prevented his coming out on Wednesday; perhaps, too, it had much to do with the non-appearance of the hounds on Friday, at Battlefield.

Here is a leaf out of old records, to while away this interregnum of frost that 1885 has brought us.

On the first of August, 1824, it is recorded that a meeting was held to establish a pack of hounds in the central part of Shropshire, "which had long been thought desirable as an inducement to country gentlemen to reside among their tenantry, and to expend their incomes at home." A subscription was therefore got up privately, and the Shrewsbury tradesmen were called upon to aid it. It was the hope of the committee on that occasion that a county kennel should be established on Kingsland, and the outcome of this plucky endeavour was crowned with the greatest success, as Sir Bellingham Graham was induced to leave Leicestershire, where he was a leading spirit, and take the Shropshire county. He rented Mr. Loxdale's house, upon Kingsland.

Nimrod graphically describes his visit to Shropshire and Sir Bellingham in particular, "I found him," he says, "not in the most comfortable situation I ever found him in. He was sitttng half asleep by his fireside, having, for the first time in his life, entirely lost his hounds, and missed one of the finest runs they had had for a long time. The fact was they had slipped away down wind at a ripping pace, and taking a severe country, all against the collar, his chance of catching them was at an end, so he came home." The next day was the dinner of "The Shropshire Hunt," at the Lion Hotel, with Sir Rowland Hill as the president, and a sumptuous affair it was, the evening being spent in the usual convivial style of that day. Their first day's hunting was at the Fox, on the Ellesmere Road. A frost that made the fallows a little hard, but they had a sharp burst of twenty five minutes, and lost by an untoward check. Nimrod was much struck with the workmanship of a youth of fourteen, the son of a Shropshire yeoman, the nephew of a Mr. Stephen Matthews, himself a capital performer, "and I ventured to tell him his nephew will make a first rate performer." After

hunting came another hunt dinner, when, "towards the heel of the evening a storm arose, and slugs in a sawpit, instead of foxhunting, was to have been the order of the day on the forthcoming day. I was sorry, for fighting and foxhunting are very opposite pursuits, and Euripides observes that Mars, though a favourite with Venus, is never seen in company with Bacchus."

On Thursday, the fifth of January, Sir Bellingham met at Sundorne, the seat of the late Mr Corbet, who for so many years hunted Warwickshire.

"We found immediately. and went very sharply to Haman (sic) Hill, where, under the shelf of the precipice, the pack divided, and, unseen by everybody but the first whip, all but six couples and a half went away to Attingham with a fresh fox. Strange to say, we ran the hunted fox for more than an hour with these six and a half couples through the long chain of coverts, and there is no doubt but that we should have killed him had we not changed again. The scent was a burning one.

"An opportunity was afforded me of helping a brother sportsman in distress. That first-rate horseman, Mr. George Forester, was by the covert side, but by some means or other disappointed of his horse. Having two out, I mounted him upon one of them, and he did me the honour to say he was never better carried. I also had the gratification of mounting the third son of Mr. Corbet, now at Eton, and if we could have had a splitter, I have reason to believe he would have shoved the little mare over the country at a wonderful rate.

"Sir Bellingham and myself dined that night at Sundorne Castle, whence we proceeded to the ball. had not set my foot in this splendid mansion (certainly one of the finest places in England) since the days of that justly esteemed sportsman who so many years possessed it, and whose memory—not only as a sportsman—is so dear to his friends. Some alterations have certainly taken place, produced by the sweeping hand o time. Instead of the sixty couples of the blood of the Trojans, with Will Barrow at their head, the kennel contains a small pack of harriers kept by the present Mr. Corbet. *Fuit Ilium, et ingens gloria teucrum.*—'The glory of Troy is no more, and Will Barrow is dead.'" Mr. Corbet was called "The father of the Trojans," in allusion to the many sons of his celebrated hound, Trojan, that he bred.

Trojan's picture still hangs on the wall at Sundorne, and will well repay a sportsman's visit. Mr. Dryden Corbet will, I am sure, allow it to be inspected. Will Barrow, the huntsman, was a character of his day. After his death, there was discovered in boxes, in old stockings, and in all sorts of queer places, a sum of £1,400, besides suits of clothes sufficient for a parish. Never was such a clear case of the love of the proverbial "stocking." He might have taken a farm, or put his money out at interest, but he could not tear himself away from the old saddle-room at Sundorne. That night was a merry one at Sundorne, for Nimrod concludes his account of it thus :—

"As a proof of our mirth, Mrs. Corbet told me with the greatest good humour, that since she had been at Sundorne she had never heard the sound of voices from the dining-room to the drawing-room before that day; but the fact was, that when any good anecdote was related of a sporting nature, one of the young Trojans (there were four in the room), would put his finger to his ear and cheer it with a holloa that made the old castle ring."

ELEVENTH WEEK—January 5 to 10.

Racing and steeplechasing are dried up and frozen out subjects just now, and the number of entries for the spring handicaps do not bring encouragement for the coming year. The subject of Shrewsbury races was ventilated last week, at a public meeting, in not a highly-becoming way—the teetotallers choosing it as their field day. Joking apart, it is hardly on such grounds as these, we opine, that this old country meeting is destined to continue, or become abated. Granted, that racing, as it is carried on at present, has lost much of its local charm, does less for the improvement of the local breed of horses, and draws together fewer notables of a neighbourhood. Is racing, combined with steeplechasing and hunters' races, on this account, to be altogether eschewed by the respectability of the county? Is nothing to be done in a county like Salop to rescue a national pastime from the hands of the destroyer? If so, the

day of our effeminacy and weakness have begun. Are we afraid to touch a difficult question, because the water-drinkers say it is defiling? Ere long, let us hope that the Jockey Club, or the racing authorities of the future, whoever they may be, will wake up to the error of their ways, and give a helping hand to such a meeting as Shrewsbury. Let it not then be said, "Oh, it is too late now, the course has been ploughed up for market gardens."

I fear we must write down the past week, from a hunting point of view, as a fitful and disappointing one. On Monday, with Sir Watkin's, at West Felton, there is not much to be said by those who were there, and foxes were not so plentiful as usual thereabouts; while at Ellerton Hall, with the Shropshire, foxes were plentiful, and scent was deficient.

On Tuesday, Mr. Corbet did not put in an appearance at Wilkesley.

On Wednesday, at Cressage, it was past mid-day before it was deemed prudent to make a start, and then it was indifferent "going." Cressage Park, Ford's Coppice, Kenley Gorse, and the Harnage Coverts were all drawn blank, but a fox was eventually found in Steven's Hill, that ran to the Golding Coverts, and on to Eaton Mascott, where we went to ground, and Thatcher was last seen determined on digging him out. Surely foxes are not too plentiful about there.

On Thursday I determined on a change of venue, having more than once been baulked in a determination to have a day with the Albrighton. Stafford Castle, and a hospitable friend close by, could not not be resisted. On Wednesday night, the odds were against hunting at all, but the morning revealed a change. The most cutting south wind swept over the country that it has ever been my lot to encounter, and by eleven o'clock an icy rain added its accompaniment to the delights of a hunting morning. There were plenty of stout hearts in Stafford trudging out to the meet, nevertheless, a few carriages, and a small field, mostly farmers. The master and Lady Boughey were soon there, and it was evident that something in the shape of a bit of silver was to be presented to somebody, for out of somebody's capacious pocket came a big cup, which was handed to Sir Thomas Boughey, and by him

presented to Mr. Wright, late of Coppenhall, a farmer, who for many years has been a most loyal supporter of foxhunting, has kept a gorse on his farm well preserved for hunting purposes, and has always ridden to hounds in the most orthodox fashion. Sir Thomas did full justice to his theme in a few appropriate words, and a fine old specimen of an English yeoman responded with equal happiness. Three cheers were thoughtlessly given for the master and the recipient of the cup, which were too much for the composure of the pack (the dogs, by the bye, that I admired very much), for they dashed away from Scott, and made for a worry of the cup; horse's heels went up ominously, and the whips feared for their charges, but happily no serious damage was done. "Hounds, please, gentlemen;" it was time to move off, and draw the plantation round the castle, where no fox was at home. A trot to Bury Ring, a mile or so away, soon revealed the fact that foxes were at hand. One raced round the covert, with the hounds in view of him, and if anything pointed to a run this did, as he broke to the west, with the hounds close to him over the grass. Alas, after three fields, it was evident that our hopes were not to be realised to-day, for scent was fickle. The going, too, was not trustworthy. A young lady at the third fence, had a narrow escape, her horse slipping up on landing, and falling quite six yards from the fence; luckily, however, without rolling over, and, with quiet composure, she never left the saddle! We now found ourselves close to the Shrewsbury and Stafford Railway, near Haughton, when he swung round to the right, and they ran merrily for a few fields up wind, between the castle and the covert where we had found him, and crossed the main road, making our spirits rise, as they pointed Coppenhall way, only, however, to see them check again very soon, and our good fox had to be given up near Butterhill. .

The Whittimores was the next draw, and a lovely covert this is, quite a gem for any country short of the shires. A gorse, in its prime of growth, lying snugly in the midst of a wide open country, with plenty of hairy fences to make it not quite plain sailing, and a stiff soil to hold a scent. Five minutes sufficed for a challenge, and, in two more, a fox was viewed away on the Penkridge side. "Now for a gallop at all events," hounds flew to the horn,

and never had a better start over the road pointing for railway, but not one field consecutively could they carry the miserable scent they were favoured with. 'Tis true that Scott hunted him meritoriously over the railway and road to Dunston, to within a field of the River Penk, opposite Teddersley Park, whither, if our fox wandered, he was in the South Staffordshire country. Up to this time, half past two p.m., the rain had been relentless, and, with very few dry spaces on our shivering bodies, we trotted off, as gaily as we could, to Stretton, where, much to Mr. Monckton's disappointment, a fox was wanting, and, the day over, only such a one as made me long for another, and a better chance of seeing sport over this very nice side of the country. Whether any changes will take place in the hunting of the Albrighton country it is perhaps premature to conjecture. Sir Thomas Boughey is going to live at Aqualate, an impossible distance from the Worcestershire side of the country. It is probable, therefore, that if he is prevailed upon to continue the mastership after this season, it will be on the understanding that the Worcestershire side of the country should be severed, at all events for the present. A three day a week country might yet remain quite sufficient for all sporting purposes. Sir Thomas has had a reign of twenty years, I think, and has scored a splendid success. The country is indebted to him for the energy, tact and discretion, with which he has guided the ship. His has been by no means a bed of roses—with very high game preserving in his very midst—with Lilleshall and Woodcote wholly devoted to pheasants, and with Weston partially so, he has found in the farmers and occupiers of land the true backbone of the hunt, and on them he has sought reliance, and not sought it in vain. That they will rally to the cry of "the Albrighton hunt," in spite of every drawback, I do not hesitate to say. It is indeed time that the selfishness of those in high places was tempered by the breeze that is blowing in their faces.

On Friday I did not think it would be practicable at Wem Station for the Shropshire to hunt. They did, however—drew Broughton Gorse blank, and so on to Soulton Wood, by which time the going was better, but still treacherous. Here they found what proved to be a good fox. He broke at once on the Wem side, across the

black boggy meadows fast to Prees, over the railway, to ground, near Coton Hall, in twenty-five minutes. Not a bad line, and for those who hardened their hearts, a successful gallop.

On Saturday, Sir Watkin once more opened the ball on his Whitchurch side at Maesfen, but had to encounter one of the roughest possible days, which of course militated against sport. There is certainly a continually recurring game of cross purposes between Sir Watkin and Mr. Corbet this season hereabouts, each having in turn disturbed the other's country. To-day Mr. Corbet chose a bye day in coverts hard by Sir Watkin's draw—a piece of bad taste surely! but worse still was the form displayed by several of the so-called Sir Watkinites, in leaving their own hunt, and filing off to join the Corbetites!

What could more clearly show the growing peripateticism of the hunting men of to-day than this? Looking at the loyal way in which Sir Watkin hunts this Whitchurch side of his country, sparing no expense or trouble to show sport, it does seem extraordinary that he should be treated by even one of his numerous field in such a way! Truly the patriotism of the old days is departing, and I cannot refrain from dropping a tear over it.

—

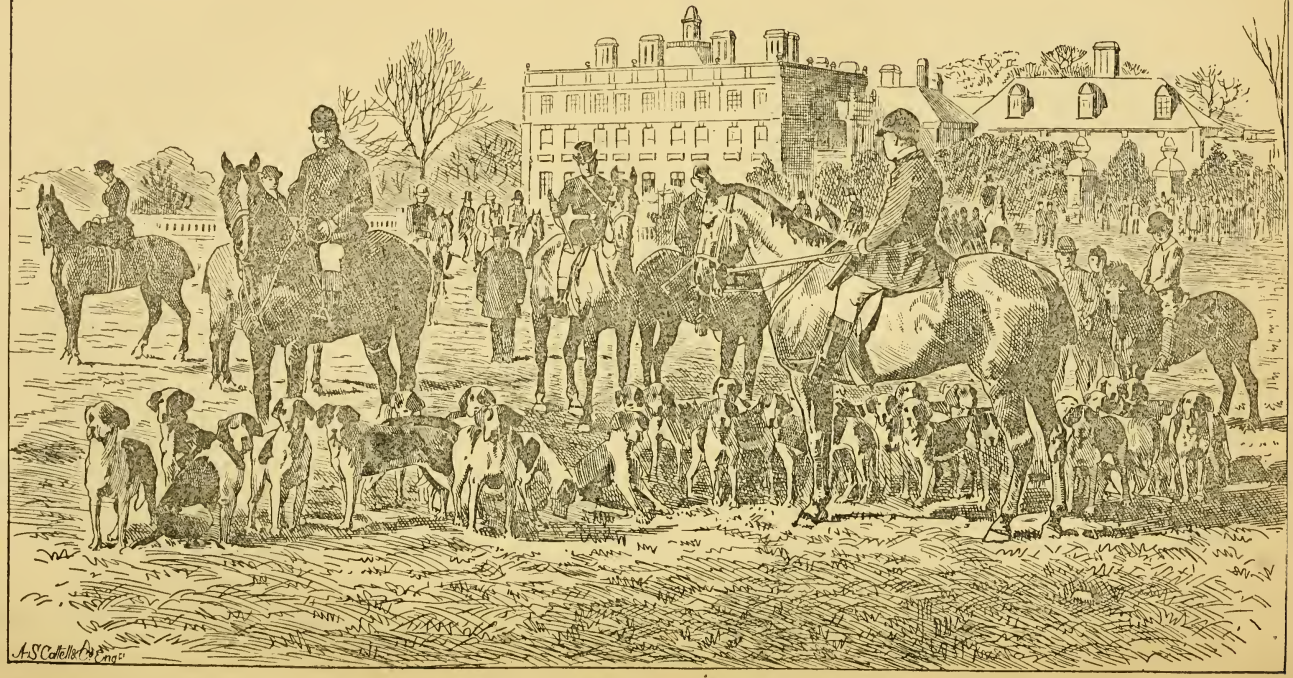
P.S.—I have since heard that Thatcher finished up the Cressage day with a two hours' dig, and murdered what was thought to be a fresh fox from Golding's coppice, in spite of the protestations of his field. This covert is close to Pitchford property, and the news will not be very pleasing to Colonel Cotes, who is so anxious to show sport, and has been so unlucky about having finds there this season. The fact is, that south of the river, Thatcher is king, lords, and commons in the absence of the master, and I know I am expressing a very general opinion that Mr. Lonsdale would be doing the right thing in appointing a deputy, to whom such a question as this, and the drawing of coverts, might with propriety be left.

TWELFTH WEEK—January 12 to 17.

The perusal of the Spring Handicaps will throw a little life into the turf world. The new handicaps at Newmarket have not quite received sufficient patronage to entitle them to reach the £1,000 added money. Perhaps, however, the Jockey Club will be generous. The City and Suburban is the most noticeable in its falling-off of entries. This can scarcely be wondered at, seeing that Epsom has failed to go with the times in the matter of added money. The Grand National once again rears its head more proudly, with an increased entry of nineteen. It is made up of a mixed lot. There are three previous winners engaged—Seaman, Zoedone, and Voluptuary, of which the last reads likely to be dangerous again. There are plenty of novices engaged—many of them Irishmen—Ben More, Ivanhoe, and Etonian being the best class of the fresh names of English horses. Little Pink 'Un, of Tarporley and Bangor fame, is among the entries, but surely she can scarcely aspire to figure successfully over Aintree. If so, sad indeed must be the deterioration of our steeplechase horses! Next week we will dissect this interesting problem a little more carefully. Shrewsbury races have, I am led to believe, more chances of revival than ever, and I was not wrong in predicting that such an old country gathering would not be allowed to die like a dog in a ditch for want of a little well-directed pluck at the eleventh hour.

As to hunting—it has been a case of another broken week. Frost unexpectedly put down its iron foot on Monday—not sufficiently, however, to stop Sir Watkin at Socket Gate. Goodall came on to Petton, where Mr. Sparling, as usual, found him no end of foxes—four brace at least in one or other of the snug spinnies thereabouts. One of them became a victim, and the rest live to fight another day. What is more satisfactory, however, only one quadruped, Captain Whitmore's favourite old horse, broke its back during the dangerous process of pursuit.

Tuesday and Thursday were given up to dancing—on the former day at Berwick, where everything was delightful, I believe, and on the latter day at the Music Hall, where the Young Hunt did its best to make everything charming and brilliant. Here, too, success beyond precedent smiled upon the scarlet runners, who rattled



THE MEET AT BERWICK.

away to their heart's content, regardless of frost and the troubles and difficulties of foxhunting. Hunt Clubs are verily a Godsend to the *matres familiarum* and dancers in general, even if they do not cast an ægis of protection over foxhunting generally. Let us hope and believe that they do. Berwick on Friday was destined to disapppoint its votaries. The bone in the ground was still there, and Mr. Lonsdale acted wisely in postponing until Saturday the wished-for sport. Such a tempting day, too, it turned out! Such a lamb-like east wind, and such soft snowstorms, gently stealing over the heated plain. Borderer was too much *hors de combat* to encounter such a day, and is indebted to a friend for the following description. Mr. Arthur LLoyd not only found them plenty of foxes, but the afternoon gentleman must have been no ordinary customer, for he travelled over a tremendous lot of ground, and fairly earned his victory at last.

"After being regaled at a princely breakfast, we all started, full of hope, from Berwick, and proceeded at once, for it was already past mid-day, to draw our old favourite—Hencote Pool.

"To everyone's grief and astonishment, it was drawn blank, so we retraced our steps over the railway to the Berwick road, and began to draw the never-failing Leaton Knolls.

"Before five minutes were over we found, and the fox, breaking cover, crossed the Berwick road, and made, as it seemed, for some point on the other side of the railway.

"Strange to relate, we lost him before even reaching the railway. Some say he doubled back—and this seems most probable—others that he lay quiet and safe in a corner of a covert near the railway, which certainly was never properly drawn.

"Then we went back to Leaton Knolls, and there began the old "see-saw" up and down the bank—it never being quite certain whether we were after a new or the same fox. At one time, we pushed one right out of Leaton, along the river bank beyond Fitz Church, but there lost him. While, however, we yet pondered whether or no he had crossed the Severn on to the Isle, we heard a holloaing half a mile behind again in the Leaton coverts, and tally-ho'd back at once.

"Things now seemed more hopeful. The fox never

crossed the road, which, cutting the bank, runs between Fitz and Leaton Church, and we pushed him out of covert at last at about a quarter to three in the afternoon.

"He was viewed by a railway porter, crossing, in his impudence, the very platform of Leaton Station itself, and while horsemen crossed the line at the bridge, Reynard took refuge in Mr. LLoyd's "privet," on the east side of the rails. Here, *consensu omnium*, we changed our fox, but our new friend showed himself to be an improvement on the old, and gave us a run which will long be remembered by all who followed him to the bitter end.

"He broke cover from Mr. LLoyd's privet at ten minutes past three, and was run, with only one serious check, till five o'clock.

"He started on a northerly tack, as it seemed, for Pim Hill, followed closely by the hounds, who, together with horses and riders, rejoiced in a good run after their fortnight's enforced inactivity. We ran a fair pace, without any check of consequence, to Mr. Eyton's small covert between Pim Hill and Merrington. We all thought he was then making for the hill, but Reynard had apparently a different design.

"We had one or two stiffish fences on the way. There was one easy fence uphill, but with an unseen deep ditch the other side. This led to a terrible catastrophe to a smart young stranger mounted by a friend on rather a groggy mare. Not being able to look before he leaped he landed his mare half-in-half out of the ditch, and himself was sent bowling head over heels (like a rabbit shot dead in mid-career) in a heavy ploughed field. To give our friend his due, he proved a plucky one, and he and his mare stuck to it, when they joined company again, till the very end.

"Well, leaving Pim Hill to the right, our fox veered round a bit, and went over some heavy plough-land in the hollow, keeping the Hollins to the left. There he was pursued over low boggy land between Higher and Lower Fennymere up to the long sedges on the south side of Fennymere Pool.

"There is a well known boggy stream running from south to north into the pool on its southern side, and a few horsemen, knowing the country, elected to avoid it, and kept to the north side of the pool, on the chance of the fox going on to Marton.

"Fortune favoured them, and the fox did go on towards Marton—but meanwhile nine-tenths of the field kept after the hounds to the south of the pool, crossing by a bridge over the stream, about half a mile from its mouth. Only one sportsman essayed the stream, which has high banks, and is about twenty feet wide, but it is very shallow. It was apparently not so boggy as it was believed to be, and he waded safely through, but he lost in time almost all he gained in the distance.

'We all effected a junction at the farmhouse at the end of Fennymere pool, and ran pretty fast across to Marton Pool; then up the hill side, leaving Marton Hall on our right, the fox having been viewed but a minute before crossing the road.

"We then went up a deep cutting near the railway, about a mile above Baschurch station, and then occurred the longest check in the run. Many, thinking of their far-off homes, and anxious for their jaded steeds (for though the pace was slow, the country was very heavy, being both boggy and saturated with wet, after rain) left us here; but the faithful few were rewarded by soon after hearing a distant and most welcome "Holloa," near Stanwardine. We at once crossed the railway bridge, and found ourselves on the Boreatton estate, a strange place for the Shropshire hounds, for, as all know, it is well in Sir Watkin's country at this point.

"Excited yokels asseverated that the fox was close in front, in spite of our long check, and we continued, at a good pace, across some grass fields, till we came close to Mr. Hunt's beagle kennels, which we left on our right.

"Reynard was here either an exile from his own native land, and consequently unaware how good a refuge he had come upon, or was too done up to run through heavy covert, for the hounds followed him on the outside of the Moss, then across the Baschurch—Ruyton road, and while they were going full cry to the Perry, all sensible riders crossed the stream by the Millford Mill bridge. What followed was by far the prettiest part of the run. We all kept on the high ground on the south bank, while the hounds went a fine pace close along the left bank, till they crossed to our side, about a quarter of a mile above the little rickety hunting bridge, put up by some sporting landowner in days gone by.

"We then followed the hounds to within a few hundred

yards of Vales Wood, where there was a brief and unaccountable check to which Reynard probably owed his life.

"The shades of night were falling fast, it being a quarter to five, and a cloudy evening, but Thatcher—who had now fairly lost himself, but was directed by Mr. Darby—tried the hounds along the Little Ness—Ruyton road, on the chance of picking up the scent, if our friend had really made for Vales Wood. Our bloodthirsty hopes were once more raised, as the hounds spoke to him again, in the hedge on the left hand side of the road at the top of the hill near the Clife. They hunted him through Vales Wood, and, though some few of us were terribly "boffled" by a wire fence in the corner, which seemed to have been the express invention of the Enemy, we at last trampled it under our feet, and, getting out and crossing the little sandy lane that turns up to the Clife, continued the chase, leaving Nesscliff a quarter of a mile to our right. But it was obvious to us all, that night would spread its friendly wings to cover poor Reynard's retreat, and there being then a slight check, Thatcher, discreet for his hounds, and merciful to our gallant fox and our exhausted horses, drew off on his weary tramp of sixteen miles homewards.

"Thus ended a run, remarkable, not for its pace, which was, except along the Perry, singularly slow, the scent being very bad on the ploughed land, but for the sure and steady way in which the hounds hunted an apparently inexhaustible fox, for the unusual time of exactly one hour and fifty minutes."

No news of Sir Watkin's day at Carden has reached me, but I have a red-letter day to tell of with the Albrighton on Monday, from Church Eaton, which I must reserve till next week. It is clear that Mr. Charles Morris, of Oxton, has some good foxes at Wood Eaton as well as about Bickley Wood, and as an ex-M.F.H., he still does his best to keep up the noble sport on two sides of the county. He was himself absent acting as High Sheriff at Shrewsbury, but I know he will be pleased to hear that his friends had two excellent runs, and were very much delighted at the way his good foxes ran. We are in for some sport now, I am sure, if only the wind will keep down in the south-east, with this moist atmosphere.

I ought to have mentioned that the Ludlow have been covering themselves with glory. In fact, I know of no

pack in Shropshire that has equalled them. A good New Year's Day at Caynham. A run from Pedwardine Wood right into the Radnorshire country at Cwmgilla Wood. A grand hunting run from Oaker Gorse to Croft, nearly to Gatley, Bircher Common, Orleton, to Eye Station, and killed at Berrington, in North Hereford country; and since then I hear of a great day from Kyre, the particulars of which are wanting. How delighted Mr Wicksted must be that he has handed his horn to such a promising young huntsman as Johnson, whom he is able to help in every way. I recommend my friends who are fond of hounds to go and see the Ludlow.

THIRTEENTH WEEK—January 19 to 24.

The Earl of Wilton is no more—the gallant Grey de Wilton of a few years back, who always held his own over Leicestershire pastures. He has left no children and rumour has it that Society papers will astonish the world with a romance of how his vast estates have passed into the hands of a noted lawyer and coroner, who once opposed Mr. Disraeli for Buckinghamshire, and how they have been brought back again for a fabulous sum by the family; but I must not rob *Truth* of such a sweet morsel.

We have had another broken week's hunting, and much disappointment in the way of scent. Nevertheless a bit of luck favoured some of us on Monday with the Albrighton, at Church Eaton, about three miles on the Penkridge side of Gnosall. Rather a select field turned up, considering that this is undoubtedly their best country. Rheule Coppice was our first draw, and it did not keep us long in suspense, a fine dog fox going away in good style, without any hesitation, over the London and North Western Railway, and, leaving Gnosall on his left, crossed Stafford and Newport main road on the grass and took us over a pretty undulating line, with plenty of jumping, and at a fair pace, through a country I am guiltless of knowing. Then, dropping again into the lower ground, we had some big fences and boggy ditches in our line before we reached Knightley Grange. Here the leading division pushed on through the wood, just in time to see, as they supposed, the whole pack a

long field ahead of them, so there was nothing left but to set full sail in pursuit. On catching them we soon found that we had only half the pack (ten-and-a-half couples), but Scott was with us, and on we went at a fair hunting pace over an intricate country, which gradually led us back to the railway opposite our starting point. The fox had begun to run very short, and the scent become very ticklish, when Scott landed in a ditch, from which he could not extricate himself, and the run came to an end close to Gnosall village—one hour and thirty minutes, which might, but for the contretemps of the hounds dividing, have ended in blood. There was nothing for it but to return in search of the rest of the pack and half our field. These we picked up Aqualate way, having been running a twisting fox all round about Knightley, ever since we left them, right glad they were to give him up, and join us again. A move was then made for Cowley Banks, by the side of the canal. Tallyho sounded here in no time, and we raced away to Wood Eaton, and crossed the Church Eaton Road in front of the house, down to and through the treacherous brook by a friendly ford, as if for Rheule, but leaving this on the left, the hounds carried a beautiful head over a stiff line of country to Barton, where, at the end of a delightful twenty-five minutes, he popped into a drain. No wonder that the pace and the country brought grief in plenty. There were several empty saddles in the morning run, but now there were more—a well-known welter tried the strength of his collar bone considerably, and a young cavalry man had to pick himself up twice. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and I had to catch a train, but to the few that stayed, the day was not over, for bolting him, or a fresh one, they had a rattling gallop back to Rheule, and from there to Haughton, and all over the country until darkness came upon the scene, and some of the hounds were lost. One, I regret to hear, was killed on the railway. This was a good day as things go this season, and a hard one for horses and hounds. Those twenty-one-and-a-half couple of Albrighton bitches are superb—such music and drive! it is a real pleasure to ride after them.

Tuesday, with Mr. Corbet at Wrenbury Station, there was an utter collapse of scent. People flocked there by rail and road. The biggest meet of the season, and the majority seemed determined to have a ride, hounds or no

hounds. The pet coverts were drawn, foxes went away to order, but scarcely out of view could the indefatigable master prevail upon his pack to own their line; so that after four good tries, all ending in failure, he threw up the sponge before three o'clock in the afternoon.

Sir Watkin, or rather Goodall, did no better from Old Oswestry, and afterwards Halston, although it was said that he might have tried to hunt one fox that was holloaed away from Halston. Probably, however, Goodall shared the disgust of his hounds, and preferred that the fox should have his run to himself, for to-day at least.

Wednesday, at Onslow, brought a large field together, whether in expectation of a "turn up" between Borderer and the Colonel we don't know. Anyhow, in this they were disappointed, as also in finding a good fox at Onslow. All the coverts were patiently drawn without a response, but as they had recently been shot a second time over, and had not had time to get quiet, this was hardly to be wondered at. The withy bed ought to tempt a fox into its thick sanctuary in about a month's time, and Colonel Wingfield is evidently most anxious to wipe out his blank scores. So on we went to Cruckton, and drew two very foxey-looking places without a whimper. The third, hard by the road, contrary to custom in this country, a good many of the field rode through with the hounds. General Jenkins said that this was to be the place where our hopes would be realised. Still, hounds made no sign—no, I am wrong—it had been three parts drawn, and the keen eye of the master of the Wheatland saw a couple go, and throw up their heads at an old holly-bush, as if winding something—Thatcher had passed within ten yards of the place. Mr. Allen cracked his whip twice, and then going close to the bush, saw in a bunch of thick ivy, about four feet from the ground, two bright eyes. This time he let fly with his whip right into the bush, and as he did so out came a nice sleek little fox that had been neatly curled up in the safest of places. Some wag remarked that in his clever instinct he had borrowed a leaf out of a pheasant's book, and finding this bird the most favoured creature hereabouts, had taken to "perching" as safer than being safer than either on or under the ground. Be that as it may, no rogue elephant ever created a more sudden or appalling commotion than did this brisk little fellow from the moment he touched

terra-firma—charging through the hounds and horsemen, across the road, in face of a multitude. The Babel was tremendous. This no doubt upset his nerves, for his course afterwards was most erratic. Now he ran round a house and buildings, and now back in a contrary direction, and then describing a letter S, he took us with a catchy scent across more roads, and through some awkward hairy fences that made their mark on the field. One man was bleeding like a pig, and must have lit on his nose; another was down twice; and two others who do not fall as a rule, were in a like predicament. This went on amusingly till we came to a little covert opposite Cardiston Church, where no doubt our short running little friend dodged back, or lay down, while Thatcher tried to make us believe that he had absolutely flown to Rowton and galloped off there, when all the time there were some lusty lungs proclaiming him back towards Cruckton. There is no gainsaying the fact, however, that the cutting east wind was fast freezing up the fallows, and that hounds' feet have to be considered. The General's "rooster" lives, we trust, to fight another day. And here ends my hunting diary for the week, frost having put a stop to all fun for the rest of it.

I forgot to say that I heard the Shropshire had a very fast thing with a kill in the open on Monday week, from Stoke Heath.

The Salop Bachelors' Ball, at the Lion, is, we fancy, only a revival of an old affair. Be that as it may, however, a capital dance was accomplished by them on Tuesday, the twentieth. Everybody seemed to do their best at enjoying themselves—the supper and champagne were capital. *Encore*, cry all young ladies, as well as the married men.

There is to be a hunt meeting at the Raven on Saturday next when I trust there will be a good attendance of sportsmen. Perhaps I am heading the fox, but I cannot help thinking that the south side of the country will again be called upon to separate itself from the north. It is hardly fair to Mr. Lonsdale to ask him to undertake it for another season, especially as he has plenty of country for five days a fortnight, or even three days a week, without it. What we want is a resident near Shrewsbury, who will quietly undertake the south country for two days a week—Wednesday and Saturday.

It will not be costly, and probably six hundred pounds a year could be guaranteed him. There is I believe, a better chance of foxes being befriended about Condover next year, and altogether the prospect of having a stock of foxes in the country is more hopeful than it was last year.

FOURTEENTH WEEK—January 26 to 31.

We have now before us the weights for the Grand National Steeplechase, and are able to judge of the chances of many of the entries. The conclusion I am obliged to come to is that they are a seedy lot, and that many could not win with two stone less weight than is assigned to them. The following twelve I prefer at their respective weights: — Zoedone, 11st 11lb; Frigate, 11st 10lb; New Meadow, 11st 10lb; Zitella, 11st 9lb; Sachem, 11st 6lb; Azuline, 11st 5lb; Captain, 11st 2lb; Roquefort, 11st; Ivanhoe, 10st 9lb; Sceptic, 10st 9lb; Equity, 10st 5lb; Eatonian, 10st. Probably these will be thinned out when the acceptances appear.

On hunting, I have once more a full week on which to dilate, and to glory in the departure of frost and east winds. On Monday, the 26th, the Shropshire were at their extreme (eastern) border at Chetwynd, near Newport, where they found a fox that immediately took them still further afield into the Albrighton country, very fast at first, but soon slowing down until he could hardly be owned as far as Offley Grove, where he was left. This was a good line, and but for the interposition of a boggy brook, which was considered unjumpable, would have been more enjoyed. A second fox from Ellerton Hall did not add much to the reputation of the day.

The North Stafford, for some unaccountable reason, disappointed their followers by not turning up at the meet on Monday; consequently, several of them took advantage of the Albrighton being at Gnosall Station on Tuesday to swell the field there. A nice hunting morning, and many good men and true were there to do justice to it. A trot away to Ranton, and a quick find in the first covert drawn, soon put life into the proceedings. For a mile or so it looked all over like a run, as hounds

ran merrily over a good line, but then scent grew catchy, and the fox began his crooked tactics, circling about between Ranton and Edenhall, once or twice touching North Stafford country, and eventually having to be given up near Ranton Abbey, after more than an hour's badgering. A move was then made to Knightley, where a fox was prettily found, but was unable or unwilling to face the open, and after racing round the wood for ten minutes, with some threadbare escapes, he scrambled into a rabbit hole. Scott was very anxious to have him unearthed and devoured, but the Master decreed otherwise, so on we went to Oulton Gorse, a pet one of Sir Thomas's own planting, and just coming to perfection. A long and careful draw, and at last a whimper. "Huic, huic," says the Master, consoled and happy. The cry soon swells. He is off, and the pack are literally on his back, flying for the canal—as usual, opinions differ as to the means of crossing. A bridge lies right and left, and the field is divided. The right hand men to-day get a little the best of it; although hounds are inclining to the left, their way is the most direct. Norbury village is raced past like a flash of lightning; Blakemore Pool is almost touched, and passed on the left. Then Knightley Grange is whisked past, and for a moment there is a hesitation in the flying sterns—a Godsend to hard-ridden steeds. But ere the rear can close up we are away again, over a road and some easier country for a few fields. Then another road, and fences come thicker and stiffer. Alas! what is that scrimmage on the right—one down and another "on top" as the Tyke would say. A lady jumping on her husband. We did not like to intrude among the endearing epithets of grief and remorse. No bones seemed broken, nor, let us trust, was any other evil consequence the result. Hounds still are hunting steadily on, and we must be with them. The country is strange—it is North Staffordshire. Yonder little town is Eccleshall, and here is Wincote Wood, a favourite covert, lying high above the surrounding country; and here, too, there is an open earth to receive our good fox. Fifty minutes, and a seven-mile point—good enough for any ordinary mortal—and everyone satisfied and happy, unless it be those who failed at leapfrog, or the lion tamer, who, to my no great surprise, came an imperial crowner a few fields before the finish.

Wednesday, at Atcham, brought lots of people as usual, and floods of rain. Attingham, for the first time this year, held no fox. Ravenshaw Gorse, only a fine outlying doe, that broke in good style. Upton Withy Bed put our shivering carcases into quicker pulsation. A fox was undoubtedly at home. He ran rather a risk of being chopped, but the field behaved well, and he slipped away at the upper end. Such a rush down the long field between the railway and the covert, only to discover a newly-erected wire fence defying us at the end of it. There was nothing for it but to poke through a nasty place at the corner in single file—a most trying ordeal—made worse by a cannon and a fall—confusion worse confounded. Poor fellow! How I pitied that good sportsman, as his loose horse nearly pitchforked me under the railway arch, and careered away for the next mile, first baulking one man and then another. I wonder if he has ever been recovered! But to the hunt, my friends. This squeezing through the neck-of-the-bottle business gave a scattered start to the field, and the hounds ran like lightning, parallel with the Tern, over a country that had to be jumped, up to Withington Wood. Twelve minutes, it was said. No end of men found the ditches too blind and deep, and loose horses kept increasing ad libitum. I must say that a veteran bit of scarlet and white cut out the work, with another scarlet and chesnut and a black and chesnut very handy. Through Withington Wood the hounds ran, and down the meadows to the Roden, where a fenced-in bridge caused a barrier, until five pairs of brawny arms shivered its timbers, and then its planks were found so rotten that each horse in turn dropped through, more or less. This danger passed, hounds checked on the plough, and scarce owned a line beyond the canal near Sugden. Whether our fox ran the canal bank right handed, or whether he went on to Forester's Plantation, and the pelting rain obliterated his whereabouts, this deponent sayeth not; but all agreed that that first spin was worth doing a few more times in our lives, while health and strength remained with us. Holly Coppice, Haughmond Hill, and Longnor refused to add to the day's pleasure, and those who reached home dry must have been very few.

Thursday I know nothing about; but Sir Watkin's Wednesday, at New Street Lane, was a terrible failure.

A bad fox at Styche, and no better ones at Shavington, made no amends for a long endurance of the pelting storm that prevailed there all day long.

Friday, at Shawbury, with the Shropshire, had a more cheerful appearance, and a good field was there, including Sir Vincent Corbet, whom all rejoiced to see looking so fit and well. Shawbury Park held a fox, who scuttled off towards the river below the village to ground in three fields, before half the field knew he was on his legs. Then Shawbury Heath and Matthew's Coppice were tried; but it was not till we reached Sir Vincent's new gorse, a very pretty and promising covert just growing high enough to hold a fox, but very bad for hounds to draw, that we were put on our metal again. The fox was not in a hurry to leave such snug quarters, and returned there from the adjoining cover before he finally hardened his heart as if he meant Acton Reynald, but swinging to the right, went through Matthew's Coppice to Shawbury Heath, and then putting us on the grass, the run became a merry one for a few fields, strongly enclosed, until an open drain close to Mr. Ward's house at Hadnal received our fox, and ended our hopes of a good gallop to Preston Gubbalds. The afternoon was not improving, as hounds moved back to Acton Reynald, where in the Lee covert they soon found, but he was not destined to live long, for he apparently broke his leg coming out of the covert at some wire fencing, and of course was killed there and then. No. 4 was found in the Forge Covert, near Moreton Corbett, and hounds ran very fast up to the road, where they checked, and apparently were unable to recover the line. The majority of the field went home well drenched, but Thatcher picked him up again in the Lee, and ran him round the Park. A single hound got a view, and cutting him off turned him into the jaws of the pack, opposite Sir Vincent's front gate. A most orthodox little fox, but, like the other specimens of the day, sadly wanting in stamina.

On the same day I hear Mr. Corbet had a brilliant thirty-seven minutes from Hurlestone with a kill, not straight, but worthy of the occasion.

On Saturday, the thirty-first, Shropshire in the County Town was given to selling and buying horses, and discoursing on the hunting arrangements for next season South of the Severn. The Shrewsbury horse sales are

decidedly improving—the animals change hands in a bonâ-fide way, and Messrs. Hall, Wateridge, and Owen are to be congratulated on their efforts. It is perhaps a pity to mix up cart horses with nags and hunters so much, but this is a lesser evil.

Of the hunt meeting I would fain say that what looked like a tangled skein at starting, unravelled itself marvellously under the Chairman's (Mr. Hulton Harrop) tender handling. Mr. Henry Lingen Burton consented to retain the secretaryship for another season, and the guarantors one after another consented to hold to their posts, so that our Wednesdays, for another season at least, are safe, and we have time to look round, and consider well our position before launching into anything new.

A determination that there shall be no more blank days will gladden Mr. Lonsdale's heart, I am sure, beyond the measure of guarantees.

By the bye, can nothing be done to soften the feelings of the L. & N. W. R. Co. towards hunting men? In these days of diminished receipts, to refuse remunerative traffic seems extraordinary, and yet not all my powers of persuasion can prevail on them to book horse boxes for Gnosall by the twenty minutes past ten train from Shrewsbury. This is the only central station for the best Albrighton meets, and would be well patronised, as it is so nicely timed for the purpose. Excuses are made that it would delay the train. I tested this myself by the earlier one, and found that one minute sufficed to back the train, and detach the box. In less than five minutes my horse was unboxed. There is no passenger train timed to reach Gnosall from Stafford for nearly a quarter of an hour after the arrival of this train, so that no block could occur by the box being shunted across the main line. Hunting men are good customers to the railways, and I am speaking the opinions of several besides myself, when I say that the present state of things is unaccommodating and unreasonable.

FIFTEENTH WEEK—February 2 to 7.

My twelve selections for the Grand National have dwindled to five among the acceptances. There has been an unexpected clearance among the middle weights.

Howbeit, Zoedone, Frigate, New Meadow, Roquefort, and Equity are not very bad ones to stand on, and I shall not look further for the winner at present. The question of the continuance of Shrewsbury races still hangs fire. The racecourse proprietors are standing out for higher terms than the promoters of a new company feel inclined to give. It seems a pity that if both parties are, as they profess to be, anxious to see a continuation of the sport, that a little more meeting each other half way cannot be indulged in. The question of putting the stand and buildings in proper repair seems to be a preliminary difficulty, but surely this should be met by the racecourse proprietors as a liability, and it would then devolve on the leasing parties to maintain and keep them in order and repair. There is yet time for wise and moderate counsels to prevail.

I understand that a project is on foot, which bids fair to bear good fruit, and this is to hold a show for young horses in the summer in connection with the puppy show, to be confined to tenant-farmers within the limits of the Shropshire hunt, and to embrace young horses of each class. I believe also it is Mr. Lonsdale's intention to obtain a good hunter sire for the benefit of the locality, in which also he has Borderer's warmest wishes. How much a man can do to benefit his fellow-men in such ways as these, will I trust, be exemplified, as the good heart of our present master expands and becomes appreciated.

Our hunting week opened on Monday with a deluge of rain. Waterproofs and stout hearts were required at starting, but eleven o'clock brought a break in the clouds, and at noon there was a clear sky. Attentions were divided between Sir Watkin, at Ruyton-XI-Towns, and the Shropshire at Hawkstone. Curiously enough, both packs rejoiced in good sport, and each obtained it by means of a raid into the other's country.

Giving preference to Sir Watkin—who himself faced the elements most nobly—Boreatton gave no results, but Grighill put us going at once, one half of the field galloping to a halloa on the north and the other half popping back with Goodall and the pack, after another that broke in a contrary direction for Boreatton. Here, by a sharp turn to the left at the top of the covert, after crossing the brook, the majority of the field were

thrown out, for while they galloped towards Ruyton the hounds turned behind them, and crossed the park by the house, with only the rearguard and two or three knowing ones in the swim with them. Dropping down across the railway, a very pretty gallop resulted across the grass to Stanwardine. Surveying the line of pursuit from above the railway, was interesting and tantalizing, I admit, but there was nothing for it but to negotiate their gaps, and overtake them in slow hunting up to Stanwardine Gorse, which the fox did not appear to have entered, but its precincts were sacred for to-day, and its earths open. So we trotted back to Baschurch, and in the sedgy plantations by the railway put No. 2 on his legs. He tried to cross the line, but was met by a shepherd and his dog, and showed his folly by preferring the jaws of the hounds to facing the lesser foe, and so was eaten, there and then. Chagrined at this, there was nothing for it but a long jog to Nesscliff, which the majority of our plucky field preferred to undertake sooner than give in for the day, and in this they were unusually rewarded. A fox was quickly found, and as quickly rattled into the open above Great Ness, then, bending to the right, he took us nicely by Little Ness, where some ploughs made us hang fire a little, until we got on the grass again across the Baschurch road, and leaving Adcote a field on the right, crossed the river near the mill, going merrily. Two fields further, and we checked again, only, however, to hit him cleverly over the next road, and steer away for Walford, where a soldier, in taking a fly at the brook that divides the two counties, came down a burster, from his horse over-jumping himself. Leaving Walford Hall on his left, our good fox was evidently bent on gaining a haven at Leaton Knoll, which he eventually did, a couple of miles further on, and Goodall wisely determined not to pursue him any further into Shropshire country, and ordered the hounds to be stopped at a quarter to five in the afternoon, after giving us a very pretty hunting run of about an hour, entirely in the open over a nice rideable country, that afforded plenty of fun, but perhaps lacked the pace that some aspiring spirits would have enjoyed. To my humble way of thinking, those big dog hounds lack the dash, music, and nose that the Sir Watkin's of old days used to be famous for—perhaps I have no right to say so, but with all the means at

command I would find a remedy for this by some means.

The Shropshire began their Monday badly; no fox in Wyrley Rough or Losford, with its swollen brook. Twemlows at first only produced a brute that ran on to Prees Heath and lay down, prepared to die there. A fine grey old fellow had been awakened by this little commotion, and on the hounds returning, he was off with a good start Ightfield way. Those first two or three yawning boggy ditches and strong fences gave hounds a lead, and the goodly contingent from Sir Watkin's Whitchurch side, as well as the Shropshire thrusters, vied with each other to catch them, as they steered straight for Ightfield church. Heads up and sterns down, there was no mistake about the pace now. Swerving to the right under Ightfield, they crossed the road, and sped on for Cloverley Gorse. Here his intentions seem curiously to have altered, as if he had not yet shown sufficiently the beauties of his district from a hunting point of view, so he swung to the left, right up the Ash pastures of notable fame. Horses had to be caught hold of tight by the head, for the fences could not be chanced, and twenty-five minutes of racing had been the task set them, when hounds checked, and the pace slackened, as he left Ashwood to his right, and Colonel Rivers Bulkeley's favourite little clump of a covert hove in sight. Another check here, and then once more the chase was continued by Broughall to London and North Western Railway at the Brick Kiln crossing, where Thatcher's powers were out-witted, and this grand fox made good his escape in Sir Watkin's country, after a run of an hour and twenty minutes, or thereabouts. All accounts agree that no huntsman could have ridden better to his hounds, or handled them better than Thatcher did, and I am pleased to hear this from disinterested persons, who seldom have the means of giving an opinion. It will be invidious to mention those who distinguished themselves, but when I say that among those present there was a Bulkeley, a Gore, a Jones, more than one Hill, a junior Lonsdale, and a young lady from Hinton way, I need not particularise further.

I am indebted to a friend for a capital account of the South Cheshire day on Tuesday.

"Tuesday, February the 3rd, at Wilkesley. There was a



A CHESHIRE START.

very big field, and Mr. Corbet gave a little law for the 'specials' to put in an appearance, so that when he trotted off to Kent's Rough, no one could complain about being left behind. Kent's Rough, altough it was all cut up last spring, held a fox, but he was a shockingly bad one. He first of all broke away on the North Stafford side, but soon turned to the left, and after ringing round a few miles, Kent's Rough was again visited, then out on Mr. Corbet's side ; he ran into a small covert below his house, where he was soon chopped. No. 2 was produced from Mr. Corbet's cover in the Park, but immediately went to ground. A terrier and a man with a spade soon made the tenement too hot, and out he bolted right into the jaws of the hounds. Shavington was our next draw, and although Sir Watkin's followers spent nearly an entire day there the previous Wednesday, bustling about, foxes were just as plentiful to day, three jumping off what is called the Island, in the Big Wood, at once. Mr. Corbet endeavoured to get the hounds together, but it was impossible, the three foxes being respectively chased by three divisions of the hounds. One division immediately accounted for one, the other two divisions running respectively right and left in the Big Wood. Mr. Corbet soon after got away with one on the Adderley side, but, running round the Park, we were soon into the Big Wood again. More running through and through this beastly wood, first one fox and then another, until all seemed to vanish, and Mr. Corbet made a move for the square covert at Burleydam. This, as also a small place close by, and Walk Mill, proved blank; but in a little thick covert within three fields of Walk Mill, called, I believe, Oakes Rough, a fox was away at once, and hounds, getting on good terms with him, raced him down to the river Weaver, just below Moss Hall, close to Audlem ; then running along the side of the river as if going into Adderley, he suddenly changed his mind and swam the river, crossed the railway, and then, two fields further on, the canal. This sounds like good business for the field. Well, it caused little inconvenience, as it all happened close to the high road leading into Audlem. Just skirting Audlem, the hounds crossed the road close to the National School, and ran as if pointing for Buerton Gorse, but turning to the left on Mr. Boote's farm, and after negotiating some rather awkward fences, and a brook

that had to be got into and out of, we found the hounds in Birchall Moss, but pushing their fox out, he pointed as if for Dodington Park; and, in fact, we ran a goodish distance in that direction Then, turning to the left, leaving Broomlands Hall to the right, our fox was now viewed not only by the field, but by the hounds as well. He, however, contrived for a time to elude his blood-thirsty followers just outside Birchall Moss, by hiding behind a door of the out-premises attached to a cottage. "An amateur whip young man" thought he would have a look round the cottage premises, and soon discovered Reynard in his new quarters. Poking him out, he ran into Birchall Moss, where he died like a good fox should do.

"It was certainly half past three, perhaps a little later, when we found, and we killed our fox about five o'clock.

"The first part of this run was certainly fast enough to please the hardest rider, but from the time we crossed the Weaver, and until the end, not so fast, but still it was a good hunting run."

Of the Shropshire, Tuesday, what can I say? It is smumed up in the word "disappointment." No vestige of a fox about Eyton-in-the-Wildmoors, while Rowton Gorse held one that actually succeeded in dodging the hounds for an hour and twenty minutes, without ever leaving his covert, and keeping the field all this time in shivering expectancy of a gallop that never came. It was quite a relief to hear, "Whoo hoop," and turn homewards.

Thursday, at Pitchford Hall, must also be classed among the unfortunate days that have been too plentiful this season. The big wood held a fox that unfortunately got hung up in some wire netting, the curse of foxes, and was nailed by a single hound before he could extricate himself. Golding Coppice held a brace, and hounds got away on good terms with the wrong one that popped into a drain close to the hall, after a few fields' scurry. Eaton Mascott was blank. And then, Condover Park became the order of the day—a certain find, it was broadly whispered. When there, a miserable keeper's foundling, hardly worthy of the name of a fox, engaged the attention of the pack for a minute or so in a hollow covert close to the keeper's house, but before the poor fellow could reach his home in the pheasantry,

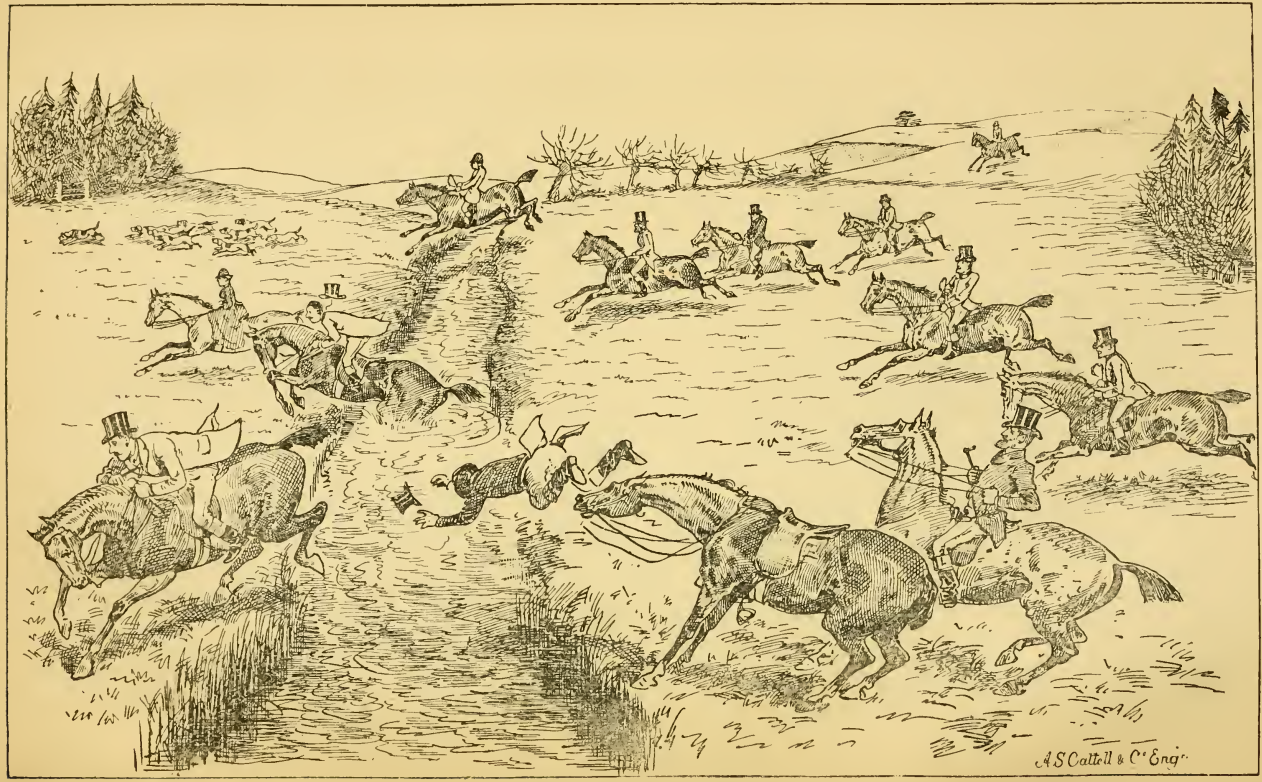
a few yards away, he was overtaken and killed—*sic transit gloria Condoveris.* Of course Bomere was blank, and thus the day ended.

On Friday, at Albrighton Hall, there was a repetition of Monday's drenching rain, but perhaps the smiling welcome of Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow softened Jupiter Pluvius' heart. At all events, at eleven o'clock, the clouds rolled away. Overcoats were cast to the winds, and Preston Gubbalds received the eager pack. A fox was on his legs instantly, and whilst the field were chatting up wind, the hounds slipped away down wind, and were fields away towards Hadnal before the majority awoke to the necessities of the occasion, and set to work to gallop madly round the covert in a follow-my-leader sort of fashion. Luckily, the fox was satisfied with a short excursion to the railway at Hadnal, and then, twisting northwards towards Hardwick Gorse, found a convenient rabbit-hole ere he got there, which brought this unsatisfactory little twenty minutes to an end. There was another fox in the Gubbalds, but Thatcher could make very little of him, and we moved off to draw Battlefield way, all to no purpose. Then we had rather a meaningless excursion back to Birchy Moor before once more retracing our steps across the London and North-Western Railway, to finish the Battlefield coverts. It was impossible to suppress a sigh over the hours thus passed in drawing the finest holding coverts in North Shropshire for the first time this season since cub-hunting, and not one whimper of response did they afford us. At last, at half past three, when many of our field were tired out, and had turned towards home, the order was for Pointon Springs, as a last resource. Minutes grew into a quarter of an hour, and still Thatcher's efforts were unavailing—the covert had been three parts drawn, when a couple of sportsmen were suddenly exercised in their minds as to what animal crept past them through the bushes—neither would quite swear that it was not a hare. The master's horn settled the question, and the next minute a dark, straight-necked looking fellow was dashing away across the open for Shawbury Park. The hounds did not settle on him quickly, but when they did there was no mistake about their intentions. Like fire they flashed through the Park, and swept out over the great ploughed lands lying parallel with the main road to Shawbury, crossed it before

reaching the village, and, turning to the right from Acton Reynald, pointed for Wythiford. We had touched a small covert here, and were nearing the river Roden, when hounds threw up, and we never recovered his line again, after twenty-five minutes of very straight and pretty running. What became of him is still a mystery, but I think he is destined to give us another good gallop, before long, from Wythiford.

Our Whitchurch Saturdays have come back to us, and to-day Borderer's emerald eye cast a longing glance towards that favoured land, as he wended his way towards Market Drayton. This is what was wafted to him on the breeze. "A fox at Sandford Pool, of course—and a good one; a quick start, and the usual race over the fifty-acre field, as if for Cloverley—not his point, however, to-day, for hounds are racing more to the right, and are soon across the Market Drayton and Whitchurch road, and down to the brook, luckily close to a ford. In the next field, hounds check, and then steadily pursue their way by the Losford Spinnies, and again over the brook. This time there is no ford, so hearts have to be hardened, or the chase abandoned. Some half dozen are struggling in its swollen waters. On goes the chase across the Bletchley Moor, where some barbarously black ditches and awkward fences find fresh votaries, until hounds check at the railway, and the line is never recovered. Perhaps this straight fox was winking his eye at Goodall in Buntingdale before he has done casting for him. The Cloverley big wood produces another, which is less ambitious of fame. He peregrinates to the Shavington wall, and then back to the Park, where he is caught. Cloverley Gorse responds for a third fox that goes straight into Shavington, and presently again emerges, much to the delight of the quiet road division, who are making for the front entrance, and after him come the hounds and Goodall in good style, till he manages to hide himself in the recesses of Styche Wood, and all hurry back to catch the special. The morning's run has been the redeeming feature of a nice hunting day."

Oh that I could close this budget as pleasantly as it began, but nasty, unpleasant things have to be faced even *ad nauseam*. I had hoped to have done for a time at least with vulpecidism in the South Shropshire country, but it was not to be—"If you please, sir, will



THE LOSFORD BROOK.

you come and see a fox that a man has just brought in, and wants to know how it was killed?." was my morning's salutation when these notes had nearly been penned. Away I went before breakfast, and there he was, a most splendid dog fox that man ever saw, in the pink of condition, with no exterior mark on him. Of course, a post-mortem was at once decreed, and there, too surely, were two deadly shot marks in his heart. His history was shortly this—he had been picked up in a wheat field, on Friday afternoon, at Benthall, close to the Cross Gates, and within a few fields of Rowton Wood. He had evidently been shot from above, and had run on two or three hundred yards until he dropped dead. Mr. Crane, of Benthall, on whose farm he was found, would as soon shoot his favourite sheep dog as a fox, and is naturally anxious to find the culprit. That he may be unearthed and well trounced, when discovered, is the sincere wish of Borderer, and, he feels sure, of every sportsman hereabouts. If anything can be ferretted out that is reliable, to mark the guilty person next week, I will promise to publish it in old Eddowes's front page.

SIXTEENTH WEEK, February 9 to 14.

I have very little to say about horses this week, as I do not pretend to be able to thread the mazes of the Spring Handicaps until the acceptances have been declared, and racing and steeplechasing are not yet fairly set going. It is pleasing, however, to be able to announce that Mr. Lonsdale has consented to give £50 to be run for at Bangor Steeplechases, for horses the property of farmers and tradesmen within the precincts of the Shropshire Hunt, and that if five start, £10 will be given to the second horse; the entrance to be free. So, my yeomen friends, look to your galloping gees, and do not be shy at having a fling for this nice stake, over the finest natural course that any country can supply. I think I can pick some likely ones for the work, and there is plenty of time to get them fit without overdoing them. Welshpool Steeplechases, on the thirteenth of March, will be a good preliminary canter.

Of hunting there is plenty to be said—such a fine week for scent and weather, the season has not vouchsafed to us hitherto.

Sir Watkin and Mr. Corbet have had the best of it, although the Shropshire are not quite out in the cold. On Monday, Sir Watkin met at Whittington, and, after indulging in a short scamper from Colonel Lovett's covert, a good fox was put going from Halston, close to the entrance gate. Shades of Mytton! how it would have rejoiced his daring heart to have seen what followed. An awkward start almost always from Halston—the brook surmounted, there is the canal close at hand—then, nice sound grass, and to-day it is uphill work to catch hounds at St. Martin, and past Frankton on the right, leaving Cricket on the left, to Hardwicke. Just a passing call, and they wheel to the left down to the boggy brook, as if Duke's Wood was their point. Not to-day, however, wonderful to say, for, after passing Ellesmere town on their right, they pay a visit to Oteley—whose owner still sadly laments his autumn accident—then, with a diminished scent, carry on over the Cambrian Railway nearly to Welshampton Station before crying a go. Those who know the line will appreciate its fine wild qualities, covering nearly twelve miles, and only wanting blood to seal its excellence.

On this Monday, the Shropshire met at Peplow Hall, but had to come across the Market Drayton railway to find a fox at Morgan's Pool, who took them sharply through Wythiford Wood, and on a good line to Shawbury, then slowly to Acton Reynald, where scent and the fun ended, and no second fox could be found.

I am again indebted to a friend for an account of Mr. Corbet's grand day on Tuesday, the refrain of which appears to be "ware coffee-housing."

"Tuesday, South Cheshire at Brown's Bank, near Audlem. A fox was soon found in what is now known as Lord Hopetoun's covert, close to Brook's Mill, and within a stone's throw of the meet. Getting well away with their fox, the hounds crossed over the brook and ran nearly up to Newtown Rough, but leaving that snug covert to the right, they ran down to the meadows below Audlem Station, and over the river Weaver; ringing again to the left, they ran through Brookes's Mill, over the brook and up to Newtown Rough; then nearly up to

Wilkesley, but turning again to the left before Shavington Wall. Kent's Rough was the next covert touched upon by this left-handed fox. Whether he took it suddenly into his head to go straight, or whether he found a substitute I cannot tell, but certainly matters now began to mend, and we soon found ourselves by the Great Western Railway close to the Rectory at Adderley. At this point, half the field were lunching and talking in the road, little thinking that the hounds were racing away at the back of the rectory straight for Collinswood. By degrees, it struck some one that the hounds had not been seen lately, so a move was made towards Highfields, but not a hound could be seen. Running through Collinswood, the hounds crossed the Norton road, and were soon in the Bellaport coverts; running through these coverts, we were quickly at the Market Drayton and Potteries line, which we crossed by the Knighton Crossing, then over the river Tern, dividing the counties of Salop and Stafford, over some boggy drains near Mucklestone, and eventually to ground in a rough the name of which is unknown to me. Your readers must excuse my getting so quickly over the last part of this good run, but, by way of explanation, I plead ignorance as to the names of places, and judging from the following conversation, the natives are not over fond of giving information:—Sportsman: What the devil do you call the name of this place?—Rustic: Winnington, and be d——d to you!—This was really a good run, and many a long face was pulled on hearing the news from Mr. Corbet, on his appearing at Hankelow at about a quarter past three in the afternoon for his second draw. It appears that Hankelow was understood to be the second draw, so thither all the disappointed sportsmen flocked, anxiously awaiting for the appearance of Mr. Corbet. Mr. Brooke's two little snug coverts (nearly always a certain find) were to-day blank. Mr. Greaves's grand covert was next drawn. The master gave his pack plenty of time to draw, but, alas! not a whimper, so drew his hounds out, and was soon three fields from covert, on his way to the famous Stick Covert, when there was a "holloa" back; hounds were brought back, and were soon on the line. They hunted their fox close up to Audlem, crossing the high road between Hankelow Heath and the town, and then on along at the back of the town towards Kynsal Heath.

Scent getting worse, Mr. Corbett was compelled to say "Home."

The Ludlow hounds had a memorable run on this same Tuesday. The meet was Gatley—a huge woodland abont five miles from Ludlow. Their fox left it like a spinney, and crossed the flat to Wigmore, traversed the immense woodland there in a perfectly straight line, and again took the open to Brampton Brian Park and Pedwardine Wood. Here he dwelt, and was rattled up and down, through the deer park, and almost caught on the gorse near Boar's Ford. Once more going away, however, he passed Stanage to Cwmflankey, and then to Norton, where a thick fog came on, and, the men and horses being tboroughly done up and in Radnorshire country, the fox remained the victor. This run must be fifteen miles as the crow flies, and over twenty with the work done at Pedwardine. Well done, Ludlow!

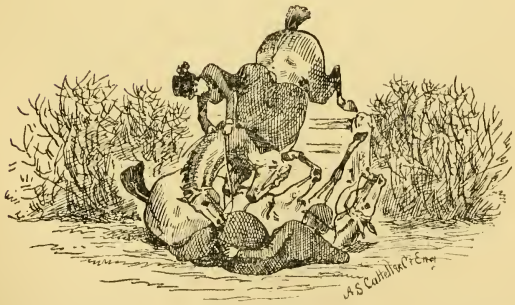
Wednesday, at Cross Gates, on the Welshpool Road, a charming hunting day. *All blank.*

An account of the Albrighton, Thursday, has failed to reach me.

Friday, at Middle, made great amends for Wednesday's disappointment. Harmar Hill produced a brace, one of whom was a loiterer, and was immediately chopped. Without loss of time, the hounds were held forward to the line of the other, that broke on the top, and then swung round as if Petton was his point, but after a mile or so he bore right-handed, and nearly touched Broughton Gorse before he circled, and eventually completed an excellent ring to Harmar Hill in forty minutes, to ground, when, by a clever bit of legerdemain, Thatcher treated the pack to a repast upon the chopped fox that had been quietly poked into a hole at starting. No finer line for trying the jumping qualities of the nags could possibly have been chosen, and I am tempted to dwell on the curious propensity that seems to have pervaded no less than six pursuers to collide with each other, resulting in disaster to all six, amongst these the ladies—(No, Borderer, your good angel says "Stay your pen—peradventure you have yet a friend or two among the ladies, and 'to hold up the mirror to nature' in their case will never be forgiven.") No bones were broken, nor even much more than temporary harm done to complexions. An excellent farmer, Montford way, does not wish the



WHO SHOT THE FOX?



A COLLISION.

experiment repeated of having the second whip's horse, as well as his own, on the top of him in a ditch. Nor does the young Squire Walford way any longer desire the too close attentions of a Shrewsbury lawyer. The incidents of this lively gallop will remain green in the Shropshire memories long after Borderer's diary has perished into oblivion.

And here we are at another Saturday with Sir Watkin at Maesfen. They are getting precious now, for are not the birds already in full song, the lambs skipping, and the snowdrops and violets poking up their pretentious little nosegays, to bid defiance at foxhunting? A big meet everyone expected, and the ladies simply thronged. I counted more than a score, and did not nearly complete the total. Sir Watkin's ladies are noted for their nice unassuming manners, steady hands stout hearts, and above all, a thorough appreciation of their sport, and their place in the field. What more could I say on their behalf? The usual news at the meet. The South Cheshire had been all through the coverts the day before, and killed a fox close to Mr. Kenyon's favourite gorse. Hard luck, especially as the veteran foxhunter, in the nobleness of his heart, had stopped his eatrhs for the Cheshire, and thus had seen one of his own foxes killed close to his own door that might have otherwise afforded sport for to-day. "To bear and forbear" is our motto, so, after a fruitless search in the gorse, we trotted gaily to Goodmore Dingle, which held a brace or more, and we soon had to scramble into and over the dingle just in time to get a start with the houuds beyond. There was no mistake about the way in which hounds flung themselves into their work, and it looked all over like being an exciting gallop for three fields, with the crowd well spread out by the dingle, when a labourer on the top of a rick headed him back to the cover, which was soon surrounded by horse and foot, so that he had to scramble into a half drain, half rabbit hole, to save his skin. Some twenty minutes were cut to waste in trying to dislodge him, and then the order was for Iscoyd. No sound here, but the best covert was being cut, so on we moved towards the Wyches with fast fading hopes, as the country grew rougher and the day waned,

Patience, mon ami, "everything comes to him who waits."

Taylor's Gorse, looked after by our excellent friend Mr.

Johnson, puts joy where all was dejection. A fox breaks instantly on the right, bids good-bye to the Wyches, and we bustle as best we can through some very rough places, beset with bogs, giving hounds a two-field lead. Now they swing to the right, and the choice is between a desperately deep dingle or a detour to the left. The straight men are first with the hounds, who are now going for Bubney. It is—catch them who can; a widespread pursuit. On each side of the rolling country horsemen seem riding their mightiest. A nasty brook or two have to be dealt with, a local vet. getting a nasty purler at one of them. Then Iscoyd looms in front, and we leave it on our right. Sweeping round it, however, imperceptibly, we quit altogether the ploughs, and horses take heart of grace as we fly along for the fens. Sporting reader, do not imagine it is quite plain sailing even now, for every conceivable fence has to be taken on the chance; hounds are racing, and hot blood courses every vein as we strive to be somewhere in the hunt. Before Bettisfield is reached, hounds once more make a circle. This time our fox's head is pointed for Maesfen, and the effort to live the pace is getting serious, and this not only to us, for yonder dark object under the hedge, doubling from the over-eager pack, is undoubtedly the form of our sinking fox. Nature can no longer endure this tremendous pressure. One hound turns quicker than the rest. Now only one small paddock divides them, and the next brings the final tussle. Whoohoop! It has been a gloriously exciting run of about fifty minutes, in which Borderer saw nothing to call a check—at least he can answer for personally never having pulled his horse into a trot throughout it. The country, too, was more trying than Whitchurch usually produces, and required no ordinary hunter to get through it successfully. "Arundel" will probably tell us on Saturday in *The Field* how many came to grief. There were many freeholds planted, (mine lies somewhere near the Fens, where a boggy double received me delightfully.) I am sure we covered ten miles of ground, and of course there was talk about change of foxes, but the grand old fellow that yielded us his life was an afternoon fox, and was responsible in my opinion for nearly, if not all, the fun.

While Sir Watkin's were enjoying themselves at Maesfen, Mr. Lonsdale was having a bye-day in his wood-

lands, at Hawkstone, and a clipper I hear it was ; in fact, a friend tells me that it was a regular "at home" of foxes in the High Woods that Squire Lonsdale came to disturb. Quite a dozen went away in different directions. The first was rattled from Grotto Hill, along the Terrace to the Vineyard, then back along the Terrace and away to Kenstone road and hills, back to the Vineyard, where he was nearly caught, but managed to struggle through Kenstone Gorse and nearly to the Hazels before he was killed—time two hours, and a fine old dog fox. Drew Bury Walls for a second fox, and found five or six ; raced through Kenstone Hills, and away above Hopton, through Tunstall Wood, and on nearly to Peplow Hall, then, bending back to the right, got to ground on Hodnet Heath—fifty minutes, all racing. A rare day's sport say the select few that were there. To-day's doings will, in a great measure, account for the scarcity of foxes of late in the Vale. Several bye-day Saturdays are to follow. Always draw a hill at this season, says Borderer. Several foxes were left at Pimhill last Friday. Many an "at home" will now be disturbed—only, please Thatcher, be gallant, and spare the ladies !

Probably few weekly budgets will equal this one, although another fortnight remains to us of glorious February.

The Wheatland and Mr. J. C. Allen have come to loggerheads, and this sporting country will be vacant for next year. I fancy the right man may yet be found for it, but its fates have not been propitious of late.

I promised to return this week to the unpleasant subject of the fox shot at Benthall. The deed has been a good deal discussed and ferreted into. It seems that a farmer named Dale, living in an adjoining farm, the property of Captain Severne, M.P., bragged a short time back that he had shot at a fox, but did not think that he had hit it. This occurred before the finding of the dead fox. The probability is, that, having tried his hand once, he did so again—this time effectually. The Ground Game Act has much to answer for, but it does not enumerate foxes as fair game for occupiers of land to shoot at. I should think Captain Severne will shake his head over this business when he hears of it. No better sportman lives south of the river. I shall never forget a great run we had from Wallop, in Robert Burton's

days, and the captain won the first steeplechase I ever saw run, while a boy at Eton.

A curious circumstance has come to light in the neighbourhood of Onslow and the Cross Gates, which throws much light on our recent disappointments. It will give comfort to more than one landowner, on whom Borderer has, he admits, been rather hard. This week a pipe drain near Gough's coppice being stopped up, labourers were set to work to open it. Two hundred and sixty yards from its entrance and seventy yards from its upper outlet, they came upon the carcase of a fox; still there was an obstruction, when another was unearthed, then another, and still another. Three dogs and a vixen! It appears that this drain had been dry all the summer and autumn, and that the heavy rains had flushed it. The foxes were all lying with their heads uphill, and the drain was too narrow for them to turn round. The first had created a dam, and been drowned, and the others being unable to get past him, had gradually shared his miserable fate. They had been dead about a month. No wonder therefore that foxes have unaccountably disappeared from this side of the country. It reminds me of what occurred a few years ago in the Quorn Country, when nine foxes were similarly dug out of a drain during a wet time. Moral—"Put gratings on your drains."

SEVENTEENTH WEEK—February 16 to 21.

There are times when it seems difficult to get up the steam. How can I write about horses and hounds when ever and anon the spectre of those arid plains in equatorial Africa, where a mere handful of indomitable spirits are standing back to back, facing fanatical hordes, keeps uppermost in my thoughts, and the blood of some of our best and bravest has lately weltered well nigh uselessly on its deserts, and at Khartoum? When, too, the scions of many a Shropshire home, and especially of two of our noblest and best sporting families, are just starting to aid in stemming the coming storm of Infidelism—going, forsooth, to meet a worse enemy than this—the deadly climate of a burning African summer.

"Come, Borderer," says a cheery bit of fair humanity at my elbow, "don't begin prosing and dirging any

more like this, or your journal will be flung to the flames. There is all the more reason that you should try to cheer us, and while our boys are singing the parting song 'The girls we left behind us,' give us something that we can send to cheer them even in the camp at Suakim or Korti. Hunting to the battle-stained warrior is a 'continual feast.'" In answer to this appeal, I have tried to unfold you a little budget.

Of Monday with the Shropshire at Tibberton this correspondent knows nothing.

Of Sir Watkin's Monday at Whittington he has heard a great deal. A traveller from Wales had found his way to Colonel Lloyd's gorse at Aston, and must needs return in hot haste to his rocky home at Carregynion, or some such a name, with Goodall and his pack paying him such close attentions all the way that he has to thank his bold mountain nature for his success in the day's venture.

I am indebted to a friend for the following particulars of the run:

"Sir Watkin Wynn's Hounds at Whittington, February 16th (Monday). Trotted straight to Aston Gorse, and found immediately. Our fox only made one turn round, and went away at the far side. There was a scrimmage for a start, but a nasty brook, some half dozen fields from the gorse, rather scattered the field, bringing one lady to grief. Thence straight to Sweeney, crossing the Cambrian Railway, where, as there was neither bridge or level crossing in sight, there was nothing for it for those who wished to keep with the hounds but to jump in and out. Passing the front of Sweeney Hall and across the Oswestry and Llanymynech road, we bore a little to the left, as if for Wood Hill, but our fox, changing his mind, made straight for Crag Vorda, where he was very hard pressed, and turned down the hill again, much to the disappointment of the few who had, with many struggles, surmounted this formidable obstacle. He then pointed for the rocks near Cy-ny-nion, and close to this point the hounds were whipped off, as, a thick fog having come on, Goodall was afraid of losing some of his pack. The order was then given for Halston, and away we trotted through Oswestry and Whittington to a small covert near the entrance to Halston Park, which, however, was blank. Then on to the big wood, found at once, and ran past Ebnall Farm to the canal, when

soon after scent failed, and the hounds were put into a small covert close at hand, which held a brace of foxes. The pack soon settled on one, which ran back to the big wood, where, after a turn or two round, he went away at the far end, and a friendly halloa across the road brought the hounds on better terms with their fox, who now took to the Great Western Railway, where a train was pulled up just in time to prevent mischief. This fox appeared to have a great partiality for the railway, as he crossed and recrossed several times, and eventually, scent getting very cold, Goodall drew off, and went home, very few of a large field remaining to the finish. Sir Watkin was out in his brougham during the early part of the day, and only left us as we passed through Oswestry on our way to the afternoon draw."

This morning run very much reminds me of one that John Mytton described in a letter to Nimrod, on February 17th., 1826. He says, "The shrubberies near Aston House were drawn blank. We then trotted on to Babin's Wood, a sure find, the property of that good sportsman and true friend of foxhunting, Mr. Lloyd. Almost immediately our fox was on his legs—The hounds got well together and rattled him most handsomely through the covert. I exclaimed, 'By G—, Lloyd, there is a scent at last,' and crossing the road we went away at a most tremendous pace, skirting Middleton, and running through Trenewydd Coverts, over the Oswestry road, through Old Oswestry, by Pentre Pant, leaving Porkington and Oswestry racecourse on our left, skirting the hills to Selattyn. Here the pace gradually declined, from the keenness of the air on high lands. The hounds hunted their fox to admiration, and aided in a masterly style by Graham, we ran him over an open country, all grass, nearly to Llangollen, where I tally-hoed him, and the hounds ran into him in a few seconds, after a glorious run of one hour and forty minutes. The field was smaller than usual in Shropshire, but everyone had a start. Graham went as usual a good one, as did Mr. Rocke and Mr. Lloyd—not forgetting Will—a superior artist in every way, especially good across a country. I was lucky in being very forward, having taken off my curb chain before starting, thinking that my mare had quite sufficient to carry in 14st. 10lb., without that superfluity."

The South Cheshire did well, I understand, on Tuesday, but without anything sensational in the way of foxes or straight points.

On Wednesday, Shropshire did not contribute any quota to the sixteen packs that advertised to meet on Ash Wednesday. Might I suggest to Sir Watkin that if any conscientious scruples have hitherto existed among his desciples to meet on this day, that in future "Ash at noon" would be an appropriate exception? I will answer for my good friend, the rector giving us an excellent twelve minutes from the happy text, "We found him in the wood." From the vantage ground on the top of his church tower Mr. Finch has such excellent opportunities of approving of the straight goers, and reproving the crooked ways of the many, that his discourse would be of unusual interest, and that it would be easy to point a moral. Of one thing I would promise him, and that is, that provided Sir Watkin will head the procession, Borderer will be there to supply him with copious notes, and promises him a full congregation. The offertory might go in aid of the Farmers' Benefit Society—and a rare gallop from Ash Wood might wind up the fast day!

By-the-bye, some people nowadays are married early only to doff their wedding garments for those of the chase—taking two exhilarating gallops with the Belvoir hounds—the lady carrying off the trophy of the brush at the outset of her honeymoon, and the field cheering them to the echo. How charming! Major Amcotts and Miss Wilson have indeed inaugurated their wedding most auspiciously, and are the most popular couple in Rutlandshire.

Thursday, at Acton Burnell, was a bright crisp day, and although Borderer lost the pleasure of another peep at this most interesting of Shropshire homes, yet he was pleased to hear that foxes were there in plenty, and that Thatcher rang the changes on three or four for a couple of hours or more between there and Netherwood and the adjoining places, scent not being good enough to ensure blood. Here, at all events, the true animal exists, and can run when required.

On the same Thursday Sir Watkin had more popular attractions at Whitchurch, although a Cheshire bye-day prevented the field being of its usual dimensions. Peel's Gorse was the scene of a very short chapter of fun, as the

fox had his nose straight for a drain Whitchurch way, and only afforded a few fields' scurry. What disappointing rascals these Peel's Gorse foxes are! Osmere held a wary fellow, who nipped into Combermere instanter, and afforded poor fun, until he had given up near Oak Cottage. Ash Wood then gave the eager ones a hope of warming themselves in right earnest, especially when a fox broke at the lower side, and for a few fields the pace was good. The cold frosty air, however, overpowered the hounds' efforts, and ere Shavington was reached the pace had become very slow. Here he was given up, and a move made towards home by a few. An afternoon's treat, however, was yet in store for the faithful ones. Ash withy-bed held a poor little fellow that lacked the ability to live more than three of those big fields before he was overtaken and eaten, only, however, as luck would have it, to disturb a far stronger wayfarer from a hedge-row hard by. At the risk of indigeston, the hounds were galloped forward to the new fox that pointed for Ightfield, and probably had his home in the Shropshire country, for he sped away along by the Market Drayton Road and down to the Twemlows, through it, across the Sandford road, more woodland, and then in the direction of Prees to Lighteach, when Goodall bethought him of his special train, and the shades of evening among the Shropshire ditches hereabouts, and had the hounds stopped. This was a straight and by no means bad gallop, redeeming the day from mediocrity.

Friday morning gave us a sharp taste of frost, not sufficient, however, to make the possibility of hunting doubtful at 11-30. Leaton Knolls was our trysting place, and a good field showed up, sadly missing, however, the genial face of the squire, more sadly still while remembering that he had gone to see his young Guardsman son embark for Egpyt. Many a good wish follows him today. An erratic sort of draw began with some small coverts at Bomere Heath, then the home plantations, and then the Shelf, unexpectedly without a fox. Fitz Coppice, however, soon relieved our anxieties by exposing a brace to view in very quick time. Hounds unluckily divided. The dog fox broke at once across the Baschurch road, as if he intended crossing the railway to Merrington, and he was chased fast by half the pack, till he recrossed the road and went in front of Walford Hall,

only to disappear suddenly, as far as scent was concerned, when Adcott and Nescliff were reckoned upon as possibilities by those who had participated in the two runs already over this line. I can offer no explanation of this sudden termination of what seemed to promise so well. Thatcher cast forward a trifle fast, considering that he had so small a pack with him, but the rest came up soon, and did not help matters. A long trot was now decreed to Pimhill, which, on such a beautiful afternoon, was really pleasant. The hounds were put in on the Harmer Hill side the covert, and drew it southwards. A fox was soon on his legs, and tried to break on the top, but the wind and a riding-habit was conspicuous in his mask, and he turned down the wood at the Preston Gubbalds side, and went away down wind at the bottom. It was one of the prettiest sights I have enjoyed this year, to see this beautiful long fox extending himself down the meadows, and the pack going great guns almost in the same field with him (for Borderer had run shy; he had not surmounted Pimhill, but ensconced behind a holly bush in the road opposite). There they came, black leading—a regular black doctor—then a couple of pinks, and a cluster, with a lady among them on a good-looking grey roan. That second fence with the ox rail I am sure has a big ditch—some land with a peck; all get safely over. I must stop and gape no longer, for unless I push on down the hill I shall fail to cut in with the foremost pursuers. Such a nice line of flying easy fences intervenes until the next road is crossed, and Middle Park looms closely before us, not to be entered to-day, for hounds swing for Harmer Hill, touch the quarries for a moment, only to recross the road, and take us into what appears at first sight to be a hairy country, but really has no terrors of an extraordinary kind, and once more we are at Pimhill, and to ground. All who got away voted it a very pretty little twenty minutes' ring, while the rear guard, who have had to disengage themselves from the top of the hill, voted it nothing at all. We will agree to differ. Preston Gubbalds soon put us going again at its extreme lower end, where our fox broke on our Albrighton day, and the veritable same fellow he must have been, for he pointed Hadnal way, and then made himself safe in the identical drain that gave him a hiding place then. Curiously

enough, another found in the Black Birches, Yorton way, was also acquainted with the same spot, for after making a feint to go to Preston Gubbalds, he too, hopped into this aforesaid drain, making the third fox run to ground during the day. Truly this season is unique in its "running to ground" annals!

Saturday ought to have been the meet at Carden, but ten degrees of frost unexpectedly stepped in, and countermanded the horse boxes, as well as crushed the hopes of many a score good hunting men. "To see Carden and die," has been an old Cheshire motto. Borderer is keeping it as a *bon bouche*, which perhaps may never be realised.

On Monday the Albrighton met at Hagley, and, I believe, had fair sport. Don't know the country, so can't give you any particulars. Tuesday our meet was Patshull. Not finding a fox in the Park, the master took us to Snowdon Pool; here a fox was quickly away, running a couple of rings round Beckbury and Ryton, back to Snowdon Pool, where he was killed. He was a bad 'un, trying to get to ground all the time. After this we drew Cosford, Brockton Gorse, and a couple of banks near these, all blank. It was now after four o'clock, so we made a start for home. The master went on to Badger—here they found a straight-necked fox which gave them about forty or fifty minutes as hard as they could go, and they whipped off somewhere down by Bridgnorth. It was hardly to be expected we should find in Brockton Gorse, as hounds were in it for an hour and thirty-five minutes the week before.

Thursday we met at Loynton. Blakemere Pool provided a fox, taking us by Knightley and Shelmore Park up to Ranton, where we lost him. From here we drew one or two Knightley coverts blank. Went on to Blakemore Pool again (as there were two or three foxes on foot in the morning), but didn't find. From here to Oulton Gorse, at Aqualate. Here we found at once, and had a very nice gallop of about thirty-five minutes at a very fair pace, eventually losing him not very far from Aqualate. Found another fox at Beffcote Gorse—a very pretty find, but hounds could not run him a yard. It was after four when we found this fox, and there was snow in the air—not an atom of scent.

The Ludlow, I hear, are still rejoicing in a succession of

good sport. A first rate day's sport from Kyre Park, in which several Worcestershire gentlemen took part; and again a big day right through the Maryknoll Woodlands, from the Oakley Park decoy to Juniper Bank, and back through Bringewood to Downton, to ground.

Radnorshire, on its western borders, has been in full swing for the last three weeks over the annual visit of Major Blandy Jenkins's Welsh hounds. Good runs have alternated with blank days, and very few foxes have escaped the wonderful hunting powers of these Welsh hounds. After a fine run from Abbey Cwmhir last week, the convivial chorus of "John Peel" was enlivened by the appearance of the real animal in the drawing-room. He had been dug out earlier in the evening, and after doing some gymnastic feats over the sofas and chairs, much to the consternation of the ladies, he eventually made his exit through the open window, and those ringing view halloas must have tickled his ears long after he had cleared the flower garden.

I am told that I have misdescribed the Maesfen run on Saturday week, and that we found, not in Taylor's Gorse, but in Stockton Rough, and ran through Taylor's Gorse; and that we did not go near the Fens, and killed at Park Leys Farm. Not personally knowing the country, I trusted to the typographical resources of a friend, whom I thought likely to be right. The run itself was too fast to enable people to take many bearings, and had it not been that I viewed Iscoyd House and Park from two distinct points during its progress, I should not have known that for the last three miles or so we were running in a ring. I am glad to see that "Arundel," in *The Field*, agrees with me in giving it a distinctive mark among the runs of the season. As I write, in the sporting atmosphere of Yorkshire, the snow is fast disappearing, and the hard frost is softening, so that we shall awaken the echoes of Deighton Springs to-morrow, without a doubt. I hope some kind friends will keep alive a few Shropshire notes for you, Mr. Editor, or perhaps some good things will go unchronicled.

EIGHTEENTH WEEK, February 23 to 28.

A hunting holiday! What an absurdity! Not at all, kind reader, to one whose life is not altogether given to pleasure, and whose hunting days are all the more treasured because they are holidays. Well! to dear old broad Yorkshire my steps I bent, and the first words that caught my ears on landing on the platform were from a buxom being, similarly emerging from the adjoining compartment—"Thank God, I'm once more in Yarkshire agin."

Perhaps I shall bitterly disappoint the majority of your readers, dear Eddowes, by this week taking them over fresh fields and pastures new, through unknown countries and into regions where they will be unable to follow me; leaving it to kind friends to supply the vacuum which otherwise there would be in local sport for want of Borderer's ubiquity. "To the pint however," as Old Jorrocks expressed it. A cold greeting of frost and snow, on Saturday week, augured ill for a keen excursionist of my turn of mind. Sunday, however, seemed to tone down the asperity of nature; and Monday morning shone forth with a south wind and a murky sky. North Deighton is a favourite Braham Moor meet, and long ere we reached it, pretty pink and black specks were converging by the many bridle paths "to join the gay throng that came marching along" to draw the Springs—two hundred at least. Many a well-known face was there, and many a warm greeting from friends, whose paths in life so seldom cross ours in these later days, that for one who has a warm corner in his heart for an old acquaintance, this re-union had its particular charm. Nobody seems to get older in Yorkshire, and nobody seems to lose his keenness for hunting—and "The Borderer—keen young man," as a friendly wit once dubbed him, tried to put on his best Shropshire polish, and be keen too. No fox in the Springs, nor in Smiler's Whin. The sight of it carried me back twelve years, to a great run I once participated in from here to Tadcaster Town End, and Shire Oaks, which I am almost tempted to halt and tell of now. A trot back to Braham Wood rather damped our spirits, as whoever saw a Plumpton fox run straight? Yes, he was there, the same looking creature of years before. With hounds at his brush we went for three big fields in right earnest, to Plumpton Rocks. Here he was headed from his point,

and went to the right over light ploughs, holding always a bad scent, nearly to the river, opposite Goldsborough, when he did the orthodox thing by returning to Braham Wood, and could not be traced any further—a very uninteresting ring, but the Leeds and Harrogate divisions managed to find plenty of jumps' and a lady succeeded in falling. A still worse fox showed himself in Plumpton Rocks, from which the quick bitches never allowed him to emerge alive. Rudding Park was the afternoon draw, and a fox from the top larch plantation set us a-going in better style. He might have gone over a good line to the Hags, but two fields was all he tried in that direction, then he went down to the beck under the Viaduct, as if Harrogate and the Moors would suit him, only again to retrace his steps and give us nothing but the most twisting work through the Park twice, and at last over the beck towards Harrogate—slow pottering work, that sent me home not over delighted with my first day.

Tuesday—the choice lay between Oxton with the York, or a Bramham bye-day for the dog hounds that had missed their turn, from frost, on the previous Friday. Allwoodley Crag was pretty handy, and Oxton fourteen miles, so the former had the greater charms, and in the event proved to be right, for the York had a disappointing day, a lot of country drawn blank, and only two short spurts in the way of runs. A delightful canter through Harewood Park on a morning as beautifully springlike as ever was seen, to say nothing of charming companionship, was a fair beginning—indeed, it made loitering excusable. There could be no hurry, and yet where are the hounds? Is this really the meet? Tracks of horses, naught else. "Where are they"? "Down yonder. Don't ye hear 'em?" replies a solitary pedestrian; and then the truth flashes upon us, and away we dash in hot haste for a stern chase—Borderer does not profess to pilot ladies, much less in an unknown shire, and had he not known what a trusty seat and unflinching nerve that possessor of the riding habit rejoiced in, he should have hesitated to have left the hard highroad. The truth was this—a fox had crossed the road in front of the hounds at the meet. What could Mr. Fox do except to let 'em go? And go they did with the vengeance. For thirty-five minutes the pace was a cracker, with scarce anyone except the huntsman really with them, until, after

a good six miles measured on the ordnance map, he managed to save his brave carcase in an earth in Roundhay Park, close to Leeds.

A long trot back, and two or three foxes in Camp Hill Plantation. Quickly away with one round Bramhope Village, and over the Arthington Tunnel, then by some mills, and up into a stone wall country, and down towards Poole, where it looked like catching him, but he made good his escape, and took us over a fine wild country, of which I knew not the name, until he finally beat us in a big plantation above Otley, on the edge of the Moors after a good hunting run of an hour and forty minutes—a decidedly superior day's sport. Those Bramham dog-hounds are hard to beat.

Wednesday, at Hook Moor, I have not space to dilate upon. It was a woodland meet—Boot and Shoe produced a fox that afforded a fair run before being run to ground and then killed—the Hook Woods produced a second that also had to yield his brush after a woodland hunting run—scent was good.

Thursday gave me an opportunity of seeing the York and Ainsty at Ribston Park, of sporting memory, where there was certainly a less representative gathering than in old days. There was a Slingsby, some of the Lascelles family, Munroe, Wilmot Smith, and Harry Prescot, several representatives of the Dent family, and a good many Bramham men, helping to make up a small field under Captain Brocklehurst. It struck me also that in horseflesh the captain was sadly wanting. "No wonder," said a friend, "when he has lost four this season in the field." The history of the day is soon told. A fox was quickly away from Ribston that skirted Goldsborough Moor, and then took us sharply to the railway, where he popped into the now proverbial drain. A second from Flaxby took a capital line into the cream of the country, but alas, we failed to hunt more than a mile. Ollerton was tenantless, but from a spinney near the railway, a fox, after nearly being headed into the hounds' mouths, gave us a sharp ten minutes' scurry down to the river Nidd, where he tried a drain and disappeared. Perhaps this was not a day to form a fair criterion; but I could not but compare it unfavourably with the past glories of the York, and to feel that a more experienced master would have gone back to Goldsborough Moor for an afternoon fox in

February, rather than hang about uncertain places and spinnies.

Friday, at Tadcaster Bar with the Braham is always a great affair. Being only eight miles from York, the two hunts regularly join forces, and to-day was no exception, and a splendid hunting morning to boot. A trot to Bilborough Whin revealed a tremendous cavalcade, which had not fully arrived ere Smith and his pack were away at its extreme end, and scores of hard men were scrambling for a start. Such heavy land to push along in we seldom meet with, and yet those that ride the headland see hounds bearing from them. We cross the road, and come on the welcome grass for a few more fields, then the Catterton drain puts in its plea to be jumped, and receives at least three prostrate forms—hounds check, and the pace is slower up to Angram village, where, at the usual drain, our fox is proclaimed as "gone to ground" in fourteen minutes. Collier Hag does not hold a fox, but in the rushy field adjoining, up jumps a fine fellow within a few yards of my horse. The hounds get a view, and the start is a splendid one—everybody goes crashing away as only they can do on a Bramham Friday, and every fence has a yawning ditch. Still hounds could not drive their fox to Askham Whin, nor by Angram village up to Hutton Hall, after passing which the scent improved, and they ran a big ring over the stiffest line in Yorkshire, by Rufford village, skirting Askham Whin nearly to Catterton Springs and Shire Oaks, then to the right by Heelaugh, and so round to Collier Hag again, just before reaching which, foxes were changed, and this excellent forty minutes of fast going came to an end without blood. Men and horses had had nearly enough when the order came for Scandinavia, where a fox slipped away that looked as if he had done some of the morning's work, for he could scarcely keep out of their way at starting, nor through Wighill Park to Bilton, where he scrambled into a road culvert, not ten yards in front of the leading hound. A pole obliged him to leave this, and he then tried the shrubberies, and dodged for his life till he received his quietus in the wood-stack, and thus wound up fitly a very good day's sport. Galloping, hunting, and jumping, ad libitum, had fallen to our lot throughout a lovely day, and an Ex-M.F.H. from a neighbouring country declared it was

the best day he had seen this season. Dirty coats there were in plenty, but I heard of no serious mishap.

Saturday, at Stutton Mill, Mr. Lane Fox again afforded us a treat. Not such a large field as usual on a Saturday—so much to Borderer's relief. The withy beds did not hold a fox, but the covert on the hill above did duty for them, and he was off like a shot over the road into Grimstone Park. Dwelt there not a moment, but boldly faced the big flat fields that stretched away in front of us. Hounds took up the challenge, and those lovely Bramham bitches led us a lively dance until we touched a Scarthingwell covert, only to whisk through, and slog along through the ploughs beyond it. A turn to the left here brought us to Church Fenton Station, and right across the goods-yard and main line dashed the pack. It was not the time for hesitation, so we charged the railway fence with a deep ditch, and picked our way among blocks of timber and signal wires down the main line to the nearest gate. Yorkshire railway gates are never locked. The hounds had gained three fields, and we madly crashed after them, fences coming too close and stiff to give time for reflection. The country was a dead flat, and our point was straight for the 999 acre Bishop's Wood. Would he reach that? No; but luckily for him he had a haven a mile or so nearer—a cosy drain near Rythers Plantation, although it was a near thing, hounds were coursing him at last. The watches called it thirty-nine minutes, and we all pronounced it a good straight-away gallop, the like of which is not seen every day. The long straggling line of pumped-out pursuers told eloquently of the pace. A long trot back to the country we had left was necessitated before Renshaw put us going again behind one made of different stuff to the last, as he only stood up ten minutes before he was caught. Then Bulling Wood produced a good one that brought this capital day to an end with a long hunting run of two hours to Haywood, Hazlewood, nearly to Bramham, back to Bramham, and Bulling Wood, where my horse had had *quantum suff.*, and it being five o'clock in the afternoon I pulled up. Perhaps Smith stuck to him a bit longer, but I doubt his catching him.

Not a bad week's work on the whole, and one that will ever be written in my calendar with the thickest red mark I can make. For where are the men who, as a whole, can

compare with the Yorkshiremen in their fondness for the sport, and their generous way of making others participate in their pleasures? Of all the huntsmen that ever I followed, give me Tom Smith, of Bramham Moor. Oh, that Sir Watkin should ever have lost him! Could he be won back? This deponent sayeth not, but Smith loves to talk of the old country, and there may be a lingering in his heart for fewer ploughs and drains, and a bit more grass. It is treason to write this in Yorkshire, and I will say no more.

On Monday, I hear, the Shropshire, at Hodnet, only found one fox, that gave them but a short run, and all the Wythiford country was blank. This does not sound well.

On Tuesday, at Socket Gate, Sir Watkin found three foxes in Petton Coverts, but the scent was bad, and they were lost in a few fields. They did not find again till four o'clock in the afternoon, when they finished the day badly by losing three brace of hounds on the Cambrian Railway. Goodall, I hear, leaves Sir Watkin at the end of the season.

Tuesday, February 24th, South Cheshire at Sound Heath. There was a goodish muster. I regret to have to record the death of Captain Townshend, of Wincham Hall, Cheshire, who died the previous evening, from the injuries he sustained a few days ago, caused by his horse falling over an invisible wire in a fence in the North Cheshire country.

Bromhall covert was the first draw; a fox soon went away, and after a short ringing run was lost. The Stick Covert held number two, who broke away on the far side and ran down to the river Weaver, where the hounds checked, but only for a moment or two, as they soon hit off the line to the left, and raced away with their fox straight into Dorfold Park, where either our hunted fox, or a fresh one, was killed in a small covert at the side of the Park on the canal bank. If it was a fresh fox, he was an uncommon idle one, for although he had every chance to break covert, he obstinately declined. A long trot took us to "Devil's Nest," a small covert within a stone's-throw of Broomhall, but the Nest and two other small coverts close by were untenanted. Hall-a-coo supplied number three, who broke away as if pointing for Broomhall, but having run about four fields in that direction, he turned to the left, crossing the brook

near Stamford Bridge, then the Nantwich road, leaving Aston village on the left, over the same brook again, and on into the park ; close by Wrenbury Hall leaving the hall to the right, he pointed in the direction of Cholmondeley, but the pace having been a cracker, our fox was shortly pulled down by Mr Ward's, at Sproston Wood. From find to finish was about twenty minutes, and I can only say this, that if hounds had kept on going at the same pace, few would have been able to stick to them much longer.

Who can say Mr. Corbet does not try to give his supporters plenty for their money, for, to the surprise of almost everyone, he said he would draw Court's Gorse, so to Court's Gorse we went, and a very obliging fox broke away on the Combermere side, the hounds were soon on the line, and ran their fox into Combermere Big Wood ; running through the wood, he broke away on the Osmere side, but turning to the right, the hounds either ran our hunted fox or a fresh one back into the Big Wood, where they killed him.

Wednesday and Friday in last week at Atcham Bridge and Acton Reynald gave us the two prettiest meets in the year, and as both days were sunny and bright, there was, on each occasion, a large concourse.

At Atcham we dawdled about for nearly three-quarters of an hour, determined that a contingent of hard-riding sportsmen coming by train from the north should not miss the run which Lord Berwick was sure to afford us. At last they arrived, and *multâ comitante catervâ*, we proceeded to draw round Attingham.

The withies near the Hall held a nice fox, which, breaking covert, ran up the right side of the river with the hounds but a few yards behind. Few of us expected him to escape a sudden and inglorious death, for behind were the hounds, and all around him were members of the aforementioned *catervâ* (alas! that Atcham is so near Shrewsbury) who literally "volleyed and thundered" at poor Reynard.

I saw one hound snap at him and miss him by a narrow four inches, but with a bound Reynard was in the withy bed, where he must have let the hounds run clean over him before he started again on an easterly track through the woods, and crossed the road straight for Wroxeter.

We followed, tamely trotting after hounds along the road, but buoyed up by the hope that he meant turning for the Wrekin.



MR. REGINALD CORBET.

Alas! after trotting along for a mile or two the affair came to an end a little beyond Wroxeter. Thatcher tried a long cast forward, but it was whispered in my ear by a native that there was an earth open in a garden at Wroxeter, and I expect our friend was safe and sound there all the time.

We next drew one or two coverts blank, till we came to a piece of gorse at Longnor, where the hounds devoured an ill-starred fox which could not get out north (where he intended to), for there he encountered a body of pedestrians, who headed him back. Some who were not afraid of the sound of their own voices, harangued these gentlemen in language more forcible than polite. Happy thought! How would it be to have a Whip specially appointed for this style of sportsman? A few minutes later, in the quarry at Haughmond Hill, we chopped another fox. That well-known character, "The Running Devil," was seen marching off with half the carcase. No doubt the suggestion of an enemy of his (probably an unsuccessful rival), that he was taking it home for supper, was untrue, and that he thought the hounds had had enough to eat in the last half hour without it.

We then drew the Sundorne coverts without success until after four o'clock, when we almost all returned home; but I hear that soon after a fox was found which gave a good run due north toward Acton Reynald.

At Acton Reynald fortune did not favour the brave. Of two foxes in the gorse one was run for a few fields, and lost abruptly. The rest of Acton Reynald, Shawbury, and Moreton Corbet was blank. At Preston Springs there were foxes in plenty. A vixen was killed without a run, and then hounds divided after two foxes, one of which gave us a sharp fifteen minutes, when we lost him again in Preston Springs, where we picked up the rest of the hounds again There was no further sport.

NINTEENTH WEEK, March 2 to 7.

Shrewsbury races have taken an important step towards resuscitation since I last wrote of them. The proprietors of the course have modified their terms in such a way as to gain their acceptance by the committee

appointed to promote the races, and four names have been submitted for a new lease of twenty-one years, with the option on the lessees' part to relinquish it at the end of seven or fourteen years. It is intended to assign this lease to a limited company, with a capital of £2,000, in shares of £25 each, of which £5 is to be paid up. A large portion of this capital has already been taken up, but it is desired to have the support of the county gentlemen on the directorship. Several have already agreed to take shares, and others will now be requisitioned with the same object. There will be two meetings a year —one in the spring, and the other in the autumn. Steeplechasing and local stakes will be encouraged and provision made for the carriages of the county families, which Mr. Frail banished from the course. The new company will be open to encourage athletics and cricket on the course, as well as other legitimate amusements.

I am not ashamed of the four horses that I chose out of the Grand National Steeplechase as likely to be near the mark. They must have afforded good hedging to any bold investor. Roquefort, Zoedone, Frigate, and New Meadow will, I think, have a good deal to do with the finish on the day of the race.

Welshpool this week will open the ball auspiciously in this locality. The entries are encouraging. Nightingale, if he appears, looks like winning one race or more.

I saw a useful hunter sire on Saturday at Mr. Litt's, which had just arrived ; Linnæus, by Strathconan, out of Sweet Violet, by Voltigeur. What his destiny may be I do not know, but he is of the right stamp, and took my fancy immensely.

As to hunting, the week has hardly been productive of such sport as might have been expected. The only tolerable day of which the Shropshire have to boast is Monday at Coton Hall. The Twemlows seems to be the best stocked fox covert in the hunt, as it has afforded no end of foxes this year, and to-day was requisitioned more than once satisfactorily. The first fox went across the railway to Coton, and was lost ; the second ran towards Sandford and then back to Prees, and was very erratic ; the third was the best, and, although not straight, took in Weston Hill, the Lower Heath, a visit towards Wem and Soulton Wood, in the hour and a quarter he amused his pursuers, before beating them. Altogether, it was a

good hunting day with plenty of jumping and fun I understand.

Wednesday and Friday may be summed up as bitter disappointments, as both only are noted for the inglorious death of a vixen ; the one at Dorrington being, I fear, one of the solitary breeding matrons south of the river, and the other a Leaton pet that could ill be spared. To say the least, this was bad luck ; and as dog foxes, except one from Walford in the morning, declined to show up through some well-known coverts, all the rest of the days were blank.

Indeed, my hunting week would fall flat indeed were it not for an Albrighton Thursday at Penkridge, where it was Borderer's luck to be present. A lovely hunting morning, and a goodly array mustered in front of the fine old church. Strangers from North and South Staffordshire. Even Cheshire was represented, as well as Shropshire. The lady pack certainly looked perfection, and I never saw greater confidence of sport written in a master's face than in Sir Thomas Boughey's when he moved off to draw the Whittimores. Of course, foxes were at home, and went away in hot haste on the right side, but after two fields, crossed the road to the right, and made for the railway, where an awkward sort of deep dyke, with hairy banks, and a fence on the landing side, put confusion in our ranks. The fox here turned short to the left, and ran parallel with the railway, till, in three fields, he was caught—a not very strong constitutioned one, that had only stood up for ten minutes. One thing was evident, however—there was a scent. Another fox had left the covert and we got on his line, too late to do any good with him, so it was decided to trot on towards Barton, and it was evident that the master and Mr. F. Monkton had some intent upon an outlying fox that baffled them more than once this season. Right cleverly they manœuvred him to-day for our delectation. Men were stationed at vantage points within half a mile radius of this casual's supposed abode, and Scott blew his horn when he came up the road towards Bradley. No sooner had he done so than our wily old friend crept out of his hedgerow, and was quietly slipping away when he encountered General Monkton's out-post, who tallyhoed him forthwith to another, and before one quarter of the field realised the fact that we were in action again, the

hounds were flying towards Coppenhall. Luckily, owing to the eager tallyhoes of these out-posts, our fox took an erratic course to start with that gradually let up the field ere we reached Coppenhall. Here he made a right-about-face movement, and caused us a slight check, but contrary to such contretemps in general, the pace increased as they hit him off down the hill, and dropping over the fence into the low ground, those only who rode in earnest were able to live with him for the next thirty minutes. The line afforded us plenty of grass to start with, up to Butterhill, and then, circling to the left, we appeared to go round Coppenhall again before we set our faces straight for the Whittimores, which brought us to the end of about fifty minutes from the find. There was just time to take a pull, and a welcome one, before he was away again on the Stretton side, making light of the ploughs, and flying on the grass. He must, indeed, have been a strong fox to have attempted this up-wind work after the spin he had given us, and eventually circled round nearly to where he was found, and then back within a field of the Whittimores, over the road, and then left-handed across the London and North-Western Railway and main Stafford road, down to the River Penk, facing Teddsley, but here his heart and strength were fast failing him, and the bitches were revelling over the meadows. Once again he crossed the road with his face for the home he was never destined to reach, for yonder he was toiling towards the railway; the leading hounds were soon in the same field with him, and he tried hard for the shelter of Dunston Shrubberies, reaching them ten yards ahead of his foes; one shuffling scramble round these, and he was fairly caught. A fine tough old fox that had given us as enjoyable an hour and forty minutes as any one could have wished. Plenty of galloping and jumping for every-one, and if it had been straight, would have made a considerable line on the map. I can answer for two people, at least, who were pleased with the result—the Master and Mr. Monkton. They claimed an undeniable victory over this tough old customer, that had beaten them all the season. I refrain from being invidious where all did their best; but at least five ladies rode as only good sportswomen could have done, and two of them, I heard, came from other hunts. A North Stafford grey, too,



SIR THOMAS BOUGHEY.

enjoyed himself, and negotiated a very big place, en route to the Whittimores the first time. No one can say that the Albrighton are not in form, or that pace is not accompanied by music wherever they go. Indeed, I wish I could sing fitly the praises of all concerned—of Scott and his first whip especially. Go and see them, my friends, for another day in their Gnosall or Penkridge haunts, and I will stake my reputation you will not be disappointed.

I can hear of no remarkable doings of Sir Watkin's during last week, and can answer for a remarkably poor day from Baschurch on Monday. A fox was found at two o'clock in the afternoon at Grig Hill, that meant going, in spite of being headed, and eventually got away over the bottom for Boreatton, but we never seemed to settle fairly on him; and Goodall, instead of holding them forward, cast back, and lost ground. He was supposed to have gone to ground in the wood under the park, and perhaps he did.

TWENTIETH WEEK—March 9 to 14.

Welshpool Steeplechases afforded plenty of fun, and there was a large and fashionable attendance. The course however, was rather too stiff for the present style of steeplechasers, and they tumbled over it one after another in a helpless way. Howbeit, as a successful rider confided to me, the pace was more than once made too hot to last, and we know how blown horses fall. A good local sportsman in Mr. R. K. Mainwaring carried off a couple of races, and has begun the season well.

Bangor Steeplechases will soon be here, and few reports of local training reached me. I trust that Mr. Lonsdale's £50 for Shropshire horses will not go begging for want of competitors, or else I shall be forced to exclaim, "How are the mighty Shropshire yeomen fallen from their high estate."

Some remarks have been made on my encomiums on Linnæus as a country sire, and great objection has been taken to his colour. I admit that there is a prevailing prejudice against grey as a colour, except on your wedding day. And yet how many good grey horses there are—

how few bad ones. Besides, I am just old enough to remember perhaps the best hunter sire in Shropshire during the last fifty years—"The Young Steamer"—he was a grey! Ask Lord Combermere, our best judge, what he thought of him, and what his feelings were when he was allowed to go to Ireland in his later years! No! Grey, as a colour, is really no barrier to success in a sire, no more than it is a hunter; and whether Linnæus stops here or not, I shall not reckon my patronage of him a question of colour.

Five o'clock tea is not a weakness of Borderer's, and yet after Monday's performance at Baschurch the ladies have made a dead set at him. "Oh, Mr. B. . . if we had only known it was your habit to go home so early, before the hounds had left off drawing for the day, oh, of course we would have asked you, &c., &c." What is the use of protestations when the only honest plea is one of guilty? All the excuses about lame horses, disgust at backward casts, and fatherly care for a daughter are as chaff before the wind, when your delinquency is found out. Of course they had a run after I left. "Sanford Pool always holds a fox, and he went away over the most unlikely line he could have done. Goodall did not get away, and Mr. Herbert Wynn gave us a start down over some deep ploughs to Knockin. We hardly knew where we were going. Some farmer talked about America, and I thought we were going to emigrate across the Severn. There were knowing men shying at the water cresses and bogs. There was the poor neglected Potteries Railway to be crossed, and then to the left almost to the river opposite Loton Park, where a train fever seized upon our commanders, and this curious and unlikely run came to an end, much to the relief of all but some half dozen who knew their whereabouts, and could steer clear of nature's obstacles in this seldom hunted vale, above which Severn and Verniew mingle their waters."

While thus disappointment had been the portion of the majority of Sir Watkinites, the Shropshire, by the rule of contraries were revelling in a fine hunting run. Ellerton Hall was the meet, and the master, having sprained his thigh, had to delegate his orders to Colonel Masefield. The hounds were trotted straight to Mr. Burton Burough's covert—Deep Dale, which was blank; but Chetwynd Heath produced a brace—a lame and barren vixen

received her quietus instantly, but the hounds soon settled on to a grand dog fox that went away over the brook by Deep Dale, and turned to Ercall Heath. They raced him through it, and over the river at Tibberton osier bed, pointing for Shray Hill. Here a false halloa lost us an important ten minutes, and our fox ran the road towards the Wild Moors. Thatcher, however, held the hounds forward to the big covert, and hit his line again heel way. The knowing ones declared it was a fresh fox, but Thatcher stood his ground quietly in spite of the murmurers, had the hounds turned to him, and proved himself a huntsman (a reproof to the scoffers) by setting us right all through the Wild Moors, where hounds ran splendidly up to Eyton Mill. Here our fox had lain down, and they raced him to ground in the Parson's garden at Kynnersley—got him out and ate him, as the hounds richly deserved blood after such a good hunting run of two hours and twenty minutes, the greater part of it straight. Mr. Borough has reason to be proud of having found them such a fine old fox.

Tuesday, at Gnosall Station, I hear that Ranton produced the same fox as on previous occasions had defeated them, and his tactics were as devious and successful as heretofore. Of the afternoon run I could get no particulars, as my informant had a train to catch.

My Cheshire Tuesday budget has not come to hand, but no doubt Mr. Corbet gave an excellent entertainment, in fact it was so good, the papers say, that it nearly killed Captain Park Yates, his neigbouring M. F. H. in North Cheshire, and considerably shook up Lord Alexander Paget.

The Shropshire, Wednesday, at Cound was, I understand the scene of a good hunting run, which eventually found its termination beyond Cressage Park, where a staunch fox beat them.

Thursday at Whitchurch. Probably the last, and by no means the least eventful of the season. When we say that Ash Wood was the first piece in the play it is equal to asserting that the morning was not wasted in coffee-housing. In fact a fox was so quickly away, and Good all after him with a few couple of hounds, that a part of the field who were listening to the rest running another in covert, had to be satisfied with a back seat over that nice bit of jumping country to Cloverley big wood. Here forces were joined, and a fox hunted on through the Park

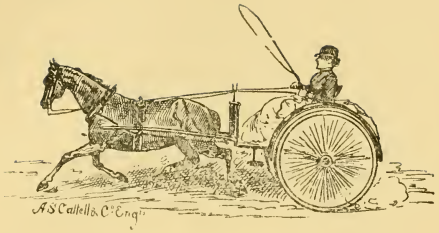
and down to Styche, where somehow or other he was lost. Another was forthcoming hard by, but was not destined for much fun. Shavington was vainly tried, and no wonder after the frequent calls on it of late. There was only Cloverley Gorse, that had already been partially disturbed, on which to fall back. Here a good-natured afternoon fox had waited, and went away to Cloverley Wood and Park, then to the left into Shavington, without entering the big wood, emerged near the wooden gates on the west for Stokes Wood, which he left to the left and gave us the cream of the day, as all the way he ran at a good pace to Ladmore Lane, then to the right over the big fields to Wilkesley, and over the road, as if for Brooks' Mill, passed Lord Hopetoun's covert, and managed to win the battle by getting to ground at Browne's Bank, close to Audlem, after a delightful run for those with second horses, lasting about an hour. If this stout fox does not fall a victim to Mr. Corbet he will be an able champion for the Cloverley side next season. Blood-thirsty as Borderer is, he loves to see some old foxes survive at the end of a season. This is their most trying time, as they begin to run jadily, and cannot stand the racket of the past month or two. No master or huntsman should forget that a few surviving old foxes are the backbone of his sport up to Christmas next season.

Thursday at High Ercall with the Shropshire is generally well patronised, and to-day was not an exception; and yet the Ercall country has singularly failed to maintain its reputation for sport this season. There has been a scarcity of the true article, for I cannot call that Rowton Gorse fox of a month ago by any other name than a mangey cur. It was all blank to-day, and it was not till Thatcher got to Ellerdine that there was any cheeriness in the day's proceedings. Here matters mended at once, for a fox well found soon had to make tracks for Morgan's Pool, and on as if for Wythyford, then short right-handed to the Hazels at a rattling pace. With the old grey once more acting as a pilot, they hesitated not, crossing the road and racing straight to Hawkstone where he vainly pushed himself into a rabbit hole a few yards in front of the leading hounds, in thirty five minutes from the find, and was dragged out and eaten. A very satisfactory gallop.

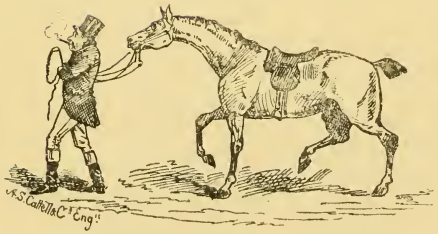
On Saturday there were rival attractions, for the devotees of hunting, who are now counting the few remaining days on their fingers; they could either go to the Plough Inn at Weston with the Albrighton, or to Wynnstay and witness the interesting presentation to Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Wynn of Sir Watkin's picture, as a wedding gift from the members of the hunt. Inclination for one other good day carried several waverers to the Albrighton, while duty and public spirit demanded the sacrifice, if such it could be called, of joining the great hunting array that went up the avenue at Wynnstay to add another token of gratitude to, and devotion for the fine old Baronet, who has contributed through a long career more to the pleasures of fox-hunters than any living man on this side of the Border. This sounds tall talking, but is perfectly true, and when we reflect, as reflect we must occasionly, that all this has been done in a princely way for love, and not money; when we remember that *the wide stretching Wynnstay Country has been well hunted from one extremity to the other for nearly half a century by Sir Watkin at his own expense*, where can we look for his compeer in these degenerate days? No wonder that they came trooping, horse and foot, by train and carriages, to add one more testimony of family devotion, as well as to cheer the rising generation.

The bright sunshine lent its aid to make the Park and its surroundings look their best, and when I say that age and youth of both sexes was fully represented from Shropshire, Cheshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire, and Mongomeryshire, my readers will understand without my adding a list of names that few well-known faces were absent in the great entrance hall at the unveiling of Herkomer's touching picture. Mr. Kenyon spoke quietly and sensibly of the feeling that had prompted the gift, and Mr. Herbert Wynn made a short and manly reply on behalf of his wife, the recipient of this invaluable heirloom of the future. Sir Watkin bravely essayed to say a few words in response, but the effort was beyond his powers of speech, and but a faint echo of that usually strong voice could be caught by the hundreds of eager listeners that thronged around him. Indeed, Borderer could scarce refrain from dropping a tear over the dear old sportsman's effort to pour forth once more his gratitude to his friends, and bespeak a helping hand in the future for those most

dear to him, who were destined to prolong the name and fame of the family. To turn from the moving lips and heaving breast of the invalid to the picture was a relief, and the effort of many to hide their feelings was only too apparent. Nobody was forgotten on the occasion, and it was quite one o'clock before the hunt breakfast was over, and Goodall, with the dog pack, trotted off to draw the hanging woods that border the park above the Dee. Few but the over eager ones seemed to care, when after about twenty minutes drawing a view halloa proclaimed a fox to be on foot. Still less chance did he seem to have of effecting his escape, so that after a scamper across a deep dingle, and up to a nice house overlooking the river, people set to work to a comfortable middle-day gossip, heedless of the fact that Goodall and the hounds had managed to slip back up a side dingle, cross the avenue, race up to the Park wall, where a good wild fox had managed to scale it up some ivy, luckily close to a lodge, and pop across the main road into the open beyond. Borderer is seldom caught napping in this way, and he congratulated himself on being one of about a score who were able to catch hold of their horses' heads in the first grass field, well in the wake of that never-to-be-denied physician. It looked all over a run as we swept along the grass, and hunted up to a farm-house. A ploughman, two fields ahead, gave us a holloa, and down we went over some respectable fences into the lower ground, crossed a second road, and ran three more fields on the grass into another road parallel with a brook—a check here ended at once our hopes of a run, for Goodall declined to give our fox credit for good intentions, which I think he had, and would not believe in his having gone forward. The country was new to me, but I fancy we were pointing for Wrexham. After we checked, up came the majority of the galloping, thrusting field, wondering whatever could have come over the mind of this Park fox to go away in this style. An afternoon fox from a cover between here and Brynypys gave us a fast scurry over an awkward line intersected with dingles, to ground near the river, and then we drew up to Overton Bridge, which, I believe, they crossed in search of yet further sport at five o'clock in the afternoon, but Borderer's discretion bid him homewards bend, pondering over the morning's event, rather than on the afternoon's sport. And hide it



AN HABITUÉ.



AN HABITUÉ.

how he might, he could not help sadly thinking that Goodall's successor would, in all probability, begin his duties under a new régime, and that, ere another season, Sir Watkin would resign the reins of mastership into the hands of his daughter's husband, of whom, let me say, that much as he undoubtedly has to learn, there are the makings of a true sportsman in him. He does not lack keenness, is fond of the hounds, and takes great notice of what they are doing. This, combined with plenty of pluck, must be a great aid to a young man taking such a country as the Wynnstay, but Borderer will be forgiven I know, if in the kindest spirit in the world, he might humbly suggest that there are still other aims and virtues which make an M.F.H. dear to his friends and his country. Among these are affability in its proper place, and courteousness always, even when touching the curb rein of a fields vaulting ambition. And even more than this, where sport is concerned, a good understanding with his huntsman is essential, and a non-interference with him in the field. A first-rate servant is indispensable at Wynnstay—then trust him, and leave the result to fate. I sincerely hope Goodall will get a good place. He is young, and has many excellent points that a huntsman should have. Borderer fancies that, with one great failing out of the way, he would be hard to beat. Winning a little more the trust of his hounds, and pushing more forward on the line of his fox, especially over ticklish scenting ground, so as to pick him up again on the grass, where an improved scent encourages hounds, and adds to the life of a run as much as it diminishes that of a fox. But Borderer is lecturing with the vengeance, for which he will probaply get no thanks, and many reproaches. It all comes of this March atmosphere, and the sad reflection that, in another week or two, "his occupation will be gone," and that "Horses and Hounds" will have to disappear from your pages, Mr. Eddowes, for a long season!

If Borderer had only ubiquity he could have told you this week and last something of Ludlow and the United doings, as well as something of the old Wheatland, but secondhand accounts are often better than nothing. Here is a hint to friends, which they can take or not as they like. A faint echo has indeed reached me of a Kyre fox, killed at Shelsley, in the Worcestershire country, by the

Ludlow, which sounds like a good hunt. Perhaps I may have yet another good woodland run to speak of ere this chronicle closes.

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—March 16 to 21.

The racing season has fairly opened, and soon after this is in print the first great Handicap at Lincoln will have been decided.

The Grand National Steeplechase is not likely to draw together such a large field as at first appeared probable, as several have pegged out. The late owner of Belmont, Major Meysey Thompson, has written an extraordinary letter to the sporting papers, saying that he understands Belmont has been pitched upon by a coterie of betting men, and is not to be allowed to win. The position of the horse in the market lends some colour to the assertion, and truly Irishmen are capable of as great roguery as any people I could name.

Hunting seems to be coming to an end this year sooner than usual. Frosty nights and bright days have almost put their veto upon it, and we seem to be struggling on with difficulty until the close of the month, when, undoubtedly, the majority of the breeches and boots will go into disuse for a few months. Nevertheless there has been a flicker of sport since I last dropped my pen, and it cannot be passed by unheedingly.

Hawkstone has certainly established, or rather re-established, itself this season as the home of foxes, and is a fixture that has invariably produced sport. Not one bad day has it afforded from the opening one of the season. Last Monday, the big lake dam at once became the scene of activity, and a fox from there obligingly left the park, near the North Lodge, and crossed into Wyrley Rough. Not dwelling here, he gave his followers a taste of enclosed country that brought out their jumping powder, nearly to Prees Heath ; then to the right, skirting the Twemlows, to Sandford Pool, where hounds checked. Thatcher, however, hit him off cleverly in the big fields beyond, and once more they rattled away over the Market Drayton road, and down to the Losford Brook, near where Sir Watkin Wynn's hounds crossed it a few weeks

back. Here, amongst others, a scion of the Thatcher family successfully began his brook jumping—the lad promises well. Unfortunately this fox beat them soon after, as unaccountedly as his compeer, or probably he himself, had done when hunted by Sir Watkin. I fancy he doubled back into the Sandpit earth near Bletchley village. Anyhow, Losford Gorse provided another, and away they went, Hodnet way, then to the left, crossed the brook low down near the railway. A ford saved very much grief, but the peaty meadows en route to Styche tried everyone's nerves who meant going straight, as hounds ran well up to Styche, and on to Shavington, close to which No. 2 went to ground. A nice gallop. A long trot back to the Twemlow, and then a fox was quickly found that also proved himself to be a good one, as he broke to the north, gave his pursuers a rare dusting, leaving Ightfield village on his right, and slipping along merrily on the grass to Ash, where, in the midst of the steeplechase course, he managed to find a hole in which to ensconse himself and be safe—as the Shropshire were outside their country. This was a very smart gallop, but a second horse was required to thoroughly enjoy it, after the morning's work. No. 4 in the Twemlow proved a vixen, and so was saved—bringing to end a good day.

Sarn Bridge, with Sir Watkin, was, I believe, a red letter day, but I have gained few particulars, and am unable to retail it properly. A fox from Taylor's Rough, I believe went to Maesfen, Bickley, and Cholmondeley, merely skirting which he turned to the right down to Wrenbury Frith, where he was killed—of course in Cheshire country. This run looks well on the map, and must have been fast, as it only lasted an hour.

Wednesday at Atcham Bridge with the Shropshire, and Broughton with Sir Watkin, were decided failures from one and the same cause—failure of foxes and want of scent. Attingham Hall coverts have grown very bare at this season of the year, and the withy beds are being cut, so that a dog fox has no encouragement to lie there, and the vixens and their earths were wisely not disturbed. Longner has been unlucky all the season. Haughmond Hill in the afternoon was more fortunate, but the day had grown colder, and worse in every respect. We managed to hunt one down to the Abbey, where he dodged us. Holly Coppice set us a going again, with, I think, the

same fox that came back across the hill fast to its lowest point, opposite Longnor, where Thatcher viewed one fox going back along the bottom, and got a portion of the pack on him, while the rest, unknown to him, showed a line of their fox straight for Longner. They were stopped, and we tried to hunt through a blinding snowstorm back to the Sundorne Pool, where our fox was supposed to have been viewed, but hounds said nay, and the rest of the afternoon was a fruitless quest through Sundorne and Battlefield woods. So, cold and wet, we scuttled home.

On Friday at Berwick Hall. The photographer was the earliest arrival at the meet. He had previously tried his hand at Atcham, but, I suppose, failed. How is it that horses and hounds hardly ever can be done justice to in a photograph? The meet was a large one, but the required animal was conspicuous by his absence at Almond Park, Hencote Pool, and all adjoining places, and Mr Arthur Lloyd only just saved his bacon at Leaton by a fox jumping up at the extreme corner of Fitz Coppice when Thatcher was drawing out his hounds. He ran back down to the home farm by the church to the station, and no trace of him could be ensured further, so bad was the scent. Bomere Heath, Merrington and the Walford coverts were blank, and so ended a very bad day. What is undoubtedly wanted in Shropshire is a gorse covert planted here and there, which at this time of year, and indeed always after Christmas, would be invaluable as a holding place for foxes. Three or four are required in the south, and the same number on the north; on the north, one on the outskirts of the Berwick property, one at Walford, one beyond Middle, near Shinglers, and one near Coton Hall. On the south, one just outside Attingham Park, on the Wroxeter side, one near Rodington, one at Lythwood, and one near the Cross Gates. I am glad to hear that the hunt has agreed to lease Ercall Heath, a large place, and well placed for foxes in the Monday country, but too far distant from Shrewsbury. This is a step in the right direction. It should not be forgotten, however, that now is the time to sow a gorse covert, and that it is a matter of no difficulty if rabbits are kept off it the first year. Why cannot our two county hunt clubs do something to encourage hunting by offering to rent a few gorse coverts



MR. C. W. WICKSTED.

if made? This would be a lift to foxhunting, for which they would be gaining genuine thanks, and I am sure the Shropshire ladies are such good sportswomen that they will back up Borderer in this. Sir Vincent Corbet has set a very good example in this matter, but I regret to say that except Rowton, on the Duke of Cleveland's land at High Ercall, there is not, to my knowledge, another thriving young gorse in the country. A rumour reaches me of one about to be planted at Pitchford. Well done Colonel Cotes; set an example, and I trust there will be plenty of followers.

The report of one other sterling good day reaches me to add to the long list of Ludlow successes this season. A real wild hill run, every yard of which I can follow with delight. Hopton Park was the starting point, the Mynde Scrubs was skirted, and down over the Bucknell Brook to Bull Hill, then over Stowe Hill, through heath that always carries a rare scent, over Holloway Rocks, and just skirting the upper end of Coedetton, leaving Skyborry on their left to Selly Hall, and straight on by the side of Offa's Dyke to Trebert, where this gallant fox could flee no longer, and sat up like a Soudanese Arab to meet his fate, after one of the finest straightaway runs these hounds have ever enjoyed. It could not be an inch less than a 12-mile point, all over open hill country, and the pace was a cracker the whole way. What could a genuine sportsman like Mr. Wicksted want better than this? and every member of his field appreciates such a run as this quite as much without jumping as with it. He was killed some miles in the United country, and it is well that this stout breed of Clun Forest foxes is not extinct.

Next week will, I fear, see a complete wind up of the season hereabouts, although I hear there ir to be a last meet at Wrekin about Easter.

TWENTY SECOND WEEK—March 23 to 28.

Sportsmen are proverbially charitable. It only needs to set the ball rolling in the hunting field, or wherever silk and scarlet assemble, and aid to many a good work is always freely given. I need therefore but mention to my readers the National Aid Society, with the Princess of

Wales at its head, and the purposes for which it is now being put forward, viz., the welfare of our poor heat-stricken and hard worked soldiers in Egypt, to win for them a plentiful flow of subscriptions. The Countess of Bradford is working on the Committee, so Shropshire is directly represented among the Good Samaritans at the head of this noble society. Don't let it therefore be said of us that while we are breathing the pure fresh air of our native land in peace and happiness, we are unconscious or forgetful of the duty we owe to our common humanity in caring for those who are fighting our battles for us so nobly in Egypt. Donations are to be sent, marked "Soudan and Egypt," to Messrs. Ransom, Bouverie and Co., St. James's Street, London, and no doubt you, Mr. Editor of *Eddowes's Journal*, will also, with pleasure, forward any local contributions to the fund that may be entrusted to you.

The first two great races of the season, at Lincoln and Liverpool, have resulted in the victory of favourites, and there can be little doubt that in Bendigo and Roquefort the best horses won. The defeat of the Shropshire-bred mare Zoedone, was, however, too bad to be true. Throughout her previous career, she never knew how to fall, but here she not only fell in the preliminary canter, but bungled at every fence, and eventually lay down in a ditch, more dead than alive. I fear she was nobbled by some rascals, and her owners and friends did not have a fair run for their money.

A general howl of disappointment was felt that the Grand National Hunt Steeplechase, by the aid of Rienzi, did not come into Shropshire. Better luck next time, Colonel Cotes, is all we can say.

Shrewsbury races are for the present under a cloud. I believe only a passing one, and that under county management they will be brought off before the year is out. The present difficulty has reference to the price to be paid to the Earl of Tankerville for the straight mile, and it is hoped that his lordship will see fit to accept reasonable terms, rather than allow the land to resume its ordinary agricultural value.

With the advent of spring, horse breeders should be thinking of mating their mares, and I trust that our Shropshire farmers will consider that breeding hunters and roadsters is likely to pay better in the next year

than it has done in the past. Inasmuch as there is such an acknowleged scarcity of good horses, that their price is sure to rise in the market. I have thought it worth while to give a list of the hunter sires that I know of in the locality, and shall be happy to supplement it next week, if particulars are sent me. Alphabetically, they are as follow :—

Canterbury, by Cathedral, out of Queen of Trumps; near Wellington.

Cardinal York, by Newminster, out of License (by Gameboy); near Oswestry.

Linnæus, by Stathconan, out of Sweet Violet (by Voltiguer); at Mr. Litt's, Shrewsbury.

Mayfly, by Underhand, out of Debonnaire; at Oswestry.

Polardine, by Beadsman, out of Regalia (by Stockwell); at Lythwood, Shrewsbury.

Roscius by the Rake, out of Tragedy, at Ludlow.

Sugarplum, by Saccharometer, out of Limeflower; at Shifnal.

Traveller, by Adventurer, out of Acropolis (by Citadel); at Lea Bridge Kennels.

Victor II., by Victor; at Meole Brace, Shrewsbury.

Mr. T. C. Cotton has a French-bred horse at Ash, called Montresor, whose pedigree I forget.

It would be found an excellent plan to have a sire show every spring in the county, giving prizes to sires of every class that will stand in the county for the ensuing season, at reasonable fees. This plan has answered remarkably well in Suffolk, and is acknowledged to have improved the breeding prospects of that locality more than anything else.

And now for yet a few more words on hunting. Scent last week was remarkably good on the grass, as was evidenced on Wednesday and Thursday. On the former day, at Baschurch, Sir Watkin, who by the by I rejoice to hear is rather better, began by chopping a fox—a vixen I fear—close on the Shropshire border at Walford. Then an incursion was made into the Lordship, and America was invaded. A brace of foxes were found in this beautiful but much too seldom visited covert, and one looked like affording a run, as the hounds went like greased lightning for ten minutes, until a drain blighted the hopes of the enterprising emigrants. Grig Hill, in, the evening wound up the day satisfactorily with a fast ring for

thirty minutes which ended where it began, and a fresh fox saved the life of Mr. Walford's original stager.

Thursday had duplicate attractions—a final Whitchurch meet with Sir Watkin, or Yorton Station with the Shropshire. Borderer had to be content with the home circuit, and was not altogether discontented with his lot. Howbeit that sweet afternoon on the Ash pastures, which never rode more beautifully since the flood, must have been a treat to those who indulged in it. A Peel's Gorse fox went straight to his master's kitchen garden, at Hinton, for his sanctuary. An Osmere fox popped into Combermere, and then to Marbury, where he was lost. And by way of a wind up, an Ash warrior circled towards Cloverly and back, then to the Walk Mill and Wilksley, with a true band of revelrie over the grass at his brush, again skirted Cloverley, and saved himself close to Ightfield by going to ground, in something over an hour. Although he did not describe a straight line on the map, from a hunting and scenting point of view, he could scarcely have gone better. For this reason at least Ash Gorse has nobly maintained its character. Yorton station drew together a fair field, considering that its competitor was Whitchurch, but nothing portrayed the waning season so much as the few pink coats, and the increase of mufties. Broughton Gorse did not respond to our expectations, but a trot back to the Black Birches was productive of a sweet chorus. So unpleasantly near, indeed, was it to Puggy's brush, that when he jumped into the road on the Pimhill side, only to be headed by a man who persistently stopped there for the purpose, hounds and he were actully there together. The clever fellow squatted down, and the hounds dashed on over the fence. and one half of them went two fields before they could be stopped. Some said it was a hare, but this I do not believe. The probability is that another fox had stolen away just before the hounds entered the covert. This curious contretemps saved our fox's life, for he popped back and went away under high pressure from the other half of the pack, over the railway, across Sansaw Park, and over the Grinshill Road, as if for Acton Reynald, but inclining to the right, we saw our fox a field ahead of us, picking his way through Mr. Bibby's ewes and lambs, and on we went like fun in front of Hardwick Grange, and still to the right, swinging back

over the railway, where some bold man preferred a level crossing, and an encounter with the Manchester express to a handy bridge. Our fox tried the drain that gave him shelter last time, but to-day admittance was denied, and he had to put his best leg forward to keep the bitches out of the same field with him up to Preston Gubbalds, which he left a field to his left, and went on by the Park Farm to Pimhill, to ground. At least, so thought the huntsman. Anyhow there was a line on through the covert, and no time was lost in getting the hounds well on it. Breaking at the top, Park Farm was again visited, and Shotton reached, where we had a check. The fox had run the road, and gone Harmar Hill way. Thatcher stuck to him in good style—drove him out at the bottom below the quarries, and before three fourths of the field knew what had happened, he and the hounds, with half a dozen followers, were at Middle Park, and out again for Merrington, where in a few fields the end came, as he dodged us on some newly sown ground, and his line could not be recovered; a pretty hunting run of one hour and fifteen minutes, fast up to Pimhill. Just at the last, Borderer found himself entrapped in some of the most dangerous wire, carefully entwined in the fences, so as to be totally invisible until we were close upon it. Indeed, had not Thatcher, who happily knew of its existence beforehand, shouted "Ware wire," another case of "over" would undoubtedly have arisen. The malefactor is a Mr. Kynaston, a farmer, who came out and leaned on his gate, probably in the happy expectation of having to pick up the bits. We then trotted away to Preston Gubbalds, where I need hardly say Mr. Sparrow had a fox for us, but it proved a vixen, and the hounds were stopped before any damage was done. Sir Vincent Corbet's gorse held a brace that were on their legs the moment the hounds entered. Luckily this time the vixen slipped back unheeded by the pack, and in another minute a fine dog fox took the open for Matthew's Coppice, and we were away on excellent terms with him. Through the upper end of this covert he went, and then out as if for Lea Wood, but not crossing the road, turned right handed between Moreton Corbet and Shawbury, and beat us in the self same spot as our Pointon Spring fox did some weeks back, with his head pointing for Wythyford Wood. It puzzles me to think what this

fox's dodge is at this point, as it all appears plain sailing, and there is no apparent reason for scent failing so suddenly. Thus ended a very pretty gallop, and by no means a bad day.

I heard a good story in the field of a farmer, who lost a lamb the other day, and of course its death was put down to a fox. Further research, however, revealed the poor little brute in the ditch of an adjoining field in a very weak state. The only thing to do to save its life was a "go" of whiskey, but the master was a teetotaller, and he had to rush off to a neighbour for the necessary draught, and so the truth came out. Foxes are not to be killed this time wrongfully.

The account of a good run reaches me from the Radnorshire and West Hereford, in which the Wolf pits plantation above New Radnor, and bordering on Sir Herbert Lewis's grouse hills was the place of departure. This fine old mountain fox went due eastward to Gladestry and Kingswood, then, circling round, came back over Hargest Ridge and the racecourse, to Worzel, and Stanner Rocks, which afforded him no safety to-day, and they killed him in capital style in the turnpike road, at Bilmore, after a run of two hours and fifty minutes.

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—April 1 to 6.

I should have mentioned last week that the following ladies are collecting subscriptions for the National Aid Society in Shropshire :—The Countess of Bradford, Mrs. Arthur LLoyd, of Leaton Knolls, and Mrs. Spencer Phillips, of the Mount.

Bangor Steeplechases will have been a thing of the past ere this is in print, and they promise to be as locally popular as ever. The course is, I hear, a big one, and the fields are not likely to be large. Easter week is so full of meetings in every part of England that horseflesh, not being ubiquitous, has too many calls made upon it to show up in very strong numbers anywhere. The absence of Sir Watkin will be painfully felt; and indeed his state of health is such as to cause earnest solicitude throughout

Shropshire and North Wales. Where shall we look for his like again?

A thorough knowledge of geography is necessary to a would-be visitor to Bangor. Not many years back a sporting resident in the Midlands decided to run his horse there. He consulted Bradshaw, chose his route, telegraphed for a bed, and box for his horse, and in due time arrived before nightfall. Capital quarters—an excellent hotel! "What other horses have arrived?" The Ostler: "None, sir." "How lucky! Mostly trained in the neighbourhood, I suppose?" "Don't know, sir." "Humph. How far is the course from the town?" "Can't exactly say, sir." "Well, the races come of to-morrow, don't they?" "No, sir; our races generally take place in the summer." "The deuce—where?" "Yonder, sir," pointing to the fading blue waves of the Menai Straits. Away rushed the infuriated owner to consult the landlord, and find out where the mythical sporting Bangor really was. In the result a night journey had to be undertaken back to Chester, and Bangor course was just reached in time for the race in which he had entered. This he nobly won, and grumbled not over the extra cost, which his ignorance of localities had entailed on him. For the future, however, he always tells his pals to go to Bangor in Flintshire, if they want to see a fine steeplechase course, and to eschew Bangor slates and yacht racing!

I find I made an omission in my list of hunting sires last week, which I hasten to correct. I forgot that "Quits," by Restitution out of Worthless, by Gemmi de Vergy, was standing at Shifnal—a premier among hunters in his day, and a rare stamp of a horse. "Traveller," standing at Lea Bridge, close to the kennels, appears without any name tn the Stud Book, but is well-bred enough for anything, and I hope is destined to make a good name for himself in the district.

A meeting has, I understand, been called for Saturday next, by circular, inviting the aid of the county gentlemen of Shropshire in the resuscitation of Shrewsbury Races. If the county and town join hands over this important sporting business there can be little doubt that success will crown the edifice. On the other hand, its obliteration from the list of old county fixtures will be a lasting disgrace, seeing how favourably it is placed for sport in all

its branches. The finest turf, a beautiful natural country for steeplechasing, and splendid stands, all within a stone's throw of the town, and central for railway and roads.

Hunting has flickered through another week, and its dying embers must be as carefully swept up, and as tenderly cared for, as its first opening flames were nurtured.

Sir Watkin, at Woodhill, resolved on a hill day, but, after chopping a fox and being thoroughly starved, second thoughts proved best, and Aston Gorse was sought. Here ills accumulated; its popular owner, ignorant of the afternoon's intentions, was absent, and a dead fox was found, so the day ended as inauspicously as it began. A post-mortem revealed the fact that Reynard's death was due to natural causes, and the Colonel breathes freely once more.

Wednesday, at Pitchford and Edge Green respectively, was famous for its pitiless rain, which drenched its votaries coldly and thoroughly. A fox at Cantlop warmed the Shropshire blood for a few minutes, while hounds ran fast to Condover Park wall, declining which he turned for Pitchford, was chased by a sheep dog, and vanished in the watery element. Nothing at Goldings, Eaton Mascott, or Bomere, and so cheerlessly home, Edge Green had scarcely a better tale to tell, as scent was not good enough to make foxes run straight, and everybody was glad to get home and into a hot bath.

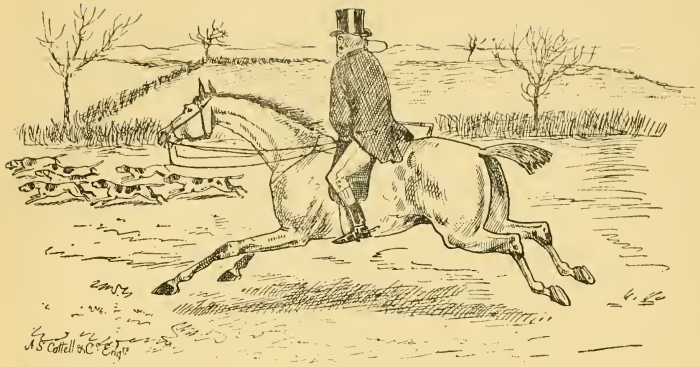
Thursday, at Battlefield. By this time the battle of the elements had passed by, and sunshine proclaimed a well-won victory—such a contrast as only an English climate could show. To-day the fine weather sportsmen, whose heads were yesterday hid under their wings, came out like butterflies in troops to jeer at the unfortunates, who had had the hardihood to venture yesterday from their firesides! A fox soon made his appearance in a covert to the west of the railway, and great was the charge of cavalry at the first hi[illegible] fence, and down a heavy plough parallel with the rai[illegible]y, which the fox crossed spreading more confusion amongst the field, which, however, was very shortlived, for he had no sooner got over the Hadnal road on to the grass than he sold us, by going to ground in a drain. An application of cold water was decided upon to cure him of this propensity, the very idea of which made him bolt. This time straight into Mr. Ward's

flower garden, threading the village and back over the railway, as if Preston Gubbald was his point, but in truth the brute had no such good intention, for he wriggled about opposite Hadnal village, and eventually found another drain under the railway, where we gladly left him, opinions differing about his sex. As a rule a Shropshire field is anxious to avoid doing damage at this time of year, and Borderer regrets to have to record a case to-day of wilfully riding over a wheat field without any necessity. The crop was a forward one, and had been rolled—the transgressor was appealed to by a leading member of the hunt, but he persisted in crossing the whole of it without the slightest necessity. I shall take a leaf out of Mr. Speaker's book, therefore, and name him—a Mr. Steadman, hailing, I believe, from Shrewsbury. Another fast sportsman jumped into a field right in front of the hounds, but this, I believe was accidental, and his punishment came swiftly, as the whole field saw it, and made their comments accordingly. A second fox was not set on his legs through Battlefield woods till we came to the keeper's plantations at the back of Sundorne, where a nice-looking fox trotted gaily away by the Abbey, and into Haughmond Hill, swinging to the left for Holly Coppice. Here, however, the clever division had already clattered down the road in front of him, causing us a check, and deciding our fox to alter his route, straight back, the way we had come, except that he crossed below the Abbey, and then broke out of the line of plantations by a farm, of which I forget the name, straight on to the Shawbury road, where the hounds threw up, and declined to own a line forward. Our fox had probably gone right-handed for Shawbury Heath. Thatcher tried widely to the left with no result. Pointon Springs was our third successful venture for the day, and at once gave hope of a gallop with the same fox that has certainly some straight-going propensities. This afternoon he went away in good style on his old line, but alas! the Sundorne keeper had placed himself at the end of the second covert, and headed him. Thus confusion was created, and his means of departure Shawbury way was barred by galloping sportsmen. There was nothing for it but to turn back towards Sundorne, and get up the semblance of excitement, to the covert on the top of the hill, where I think he went to ground. A line was shown towards

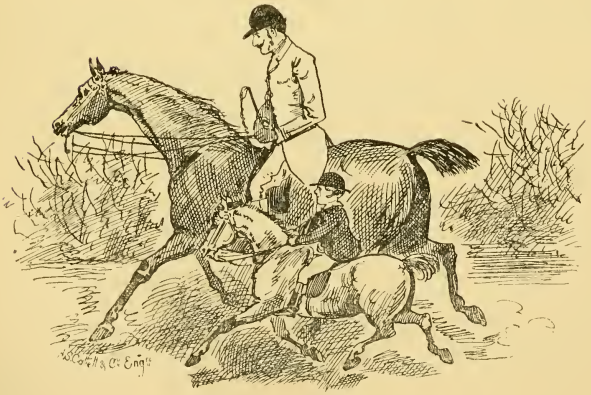
Holly Coppice, but Borderer has his own reasons for suspecting its genuineness. Thus ended our last Thursday, and but for one more finishing day at Hawkstone on Easter Monday, our season ends.

Sir Watkin will go on a little longer, and so will other Shropshire packs, but unless a change of weather comes it will be heartless work for huntsmen as well as hounds. Fences, too, are all being laid and mended for the summer, gates fastened up, and farmers must have consideration shown them. Hunting men owe them much. Never in my agricultural experience have I seen the wheat looking so strong and well; while, as for the spring crops, how could they promise better? The land works like a garden, and sowing has been carried on almost uninterruptedly for the last month. Everything points to a fruitful season.

And now, my indulgent reader, "Au revoir." Like Othello, "my occupation is gone," until once more autumn comes round, and "the horn of the hunter is heard on the hill." Each season, to the true sportsman, as it closes, is another treasured record of the sweet past —something to look back upon—something on which to build an ever-shortening future. More precious as each short winter and spring gather themselves into their garner, never to return to us. Oh, my faithful friends, turn not a deaf ear to the measured words of an elder, who drank deeply of the Pirean spring of hunting—what was true when he wrote sixty years ago, comes home to us now with equal force. I will quote him. "At a time when all the world runs mad about foxhunting, I am surprised so few gentlemen have learnt to enjoy it rationally. The fashion of the present day is hard riding, and at night, over the convivial board, their only pleasure seems to be in relating the exploits or disasters of their own or their friends' horses—not a word about the best or worse hound in the pack, nor any idea ever started to ascertain whether by system or by accident they had contrived to carry a scent, say twenty miles, over a country to kill a fox. How so great an event has been achieved few modern sportsmen can with any degree of accuracy relate. Many years ago I recollect a gentleman, who kept ten horses in Leicestershire, and who had been riding near me very often in a fine run, in which two of the most interesting and beautiful things happened



A GOOD ONE.



GOOD 'UNS.

that I ever remember to have seen. I remarked them to him, therefore, when the run was over. "Good God, sir!" said he, "I saw nothing of it." This man was a *hard rider*, who, from his own account, *saw nothing*, while riding his horse as hard as he could go, and as near the hounds as he possibly could get—and how should he? For a man *behind* hounds cannot be a judge of what is going on in front, and is the first person, by *pressing upon them*, to bring them to a check. A good sportsman will as often as possible ride parallel with the pack, not after them, unless he is obliged to do otherwise on account of their short turns. Thus he will see all that is going on, and anticipate the probable cause of hounds coming to a fault. Patience is the best performer in the chase."

Here, my friends is a terse sermon on a favourite text. Believe me we have all much to learn, when "a hunting we go." It is science that many a middle aged man is only just beginning to grasp the true beauties of, as bodily infirmities whisper to him that he can no longer hope to be in the front ranks in these fast days. All the more reason then that youth should woo it systematically and sensibly, while the dash of life is still able to carry him through it to perfection. Thus will he build up a love for the sport, which, as years roll on, the decline of his riding powers will not lessen his hunting days, nor deprive him of the pleasures of a good run. Through life he will know, and be known as a good sportsman. Not merely a man hunting to ride.

I have now said my say for the season 1884 and '85, and can only in conclusion trust that whatever corns have come occasionally under the pressure of my pen, the owners thereof have been inclined to forgive, or at all events to think leniently of my pecadillos—for be assured that of "malice aforethought" Borderer is incapable. His pen, if it has outrun discretion, has done so from over-abundant love of sport, to which he has devoted much attention.

Shakespeare tells us "That the best men are moulded out of faults," so all of us can take heart, and again I must call my favourite old bard to my aid when he says—

"Condemn the fault and not the actor of it."

If spared in health, strength, and pocket, for another

season, I shall hope to renew these notes in dear old *Eddowes's Journal*, and so to create in a humble way a treasury of hunting and sporting knowledge in Shropshire, which will aspire to fulfil the words of Wordsworth, when he says—

"And when the stream
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, Images, and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed."

BORDERER.

INDEX.

ABBEYDORE COURT, with the South Herefordshire, 26.
Acton Burnell, a frosty morning at, 30.
Acton Burnell, Nimrod at, 31.
Albrighton, the, 3.
„ at, Church Eaton 45.
„ Hadley, 74.
„ Gnosall Station, 49.
„ Loynton, 74.
„ Prospects of, 38.
„ Penkridge, 85.
„ Stafford Castle, 36.
„ The Whittimores, 37
Allen, Mr. retirement of, 67.
America, Invasion of, 99.
Ash Wednesday, Conscientious Scruples, 71,
Atcham Bridge, a large gathering at, 7.
Atcham Bridge, a fast run from, 51

BANGOR STEEPLECHASES, 102.
Battlefield on Boxing Day, 29.
Benthall, fox shot at, 61, 67.
Berwick Balls, the, 40.
„ day; by a friend, 41.
Bomere Heath, a fast run from, 28
Braham Moor Meet, the, 76.
Braham Wood, 77.
Brown's Bank, at, with Mr. Corbet, 63.

CAYNHAM CAMP, 9.
Close of the year, the, 32.
Cressage, digging out at, 39.
Cheshire, the, 3.
„ South, 3.
„ at Wrenbury, 46,
„ Sound Heath, 81.

DEAD LAMB, a good story of, 102.

EYTON-IN-WILD MOORS, 59.
Egypt, a lament over, 68.
Ellerton Hall, 10, 88.
Ercall Heath, the lease of, 96.

FOXES SHOT AT LONGNOR, 18.
„ found dead in a drain, 68.
„ at Woodhill, 104.
Fox, a, killed in a Station, 13.
Frozen-out Foxhunters, 29.

GORSE COVERTS; a suggestion, 96.

HACKNEY SOCIETY'S SHOW, 20.
Hardwicke Grange, disappointment at, 28.

Haughmond Abbey, a good run, 19.
Hawkestone, a red-letter day, at 94.
Hunting Sermon, a, 106.
,, Sires in Shropshire, 99.

"John Peel" chorus in Radnorshire, 75.

Linnæus, as a county sire, 87.
Loton Park, 15.
Ludlow, the, 3.
,, at Caynham, 45.
,, ,, Gatley, 64.
,, ,, Hopton Park, 97.
,, ,, Kyre, 75.
,, a day with the, 64.
Lythwood, a blank day at, 18, 21.

Mytton, Jack; an anniversary, 70.

Nimrod at Acton Burnell, 31.
,, Sundorne, 33.
,, Ellesmere Road, 33.
National Aid Society, the, 97.

Old Stories re-told, 33.
Opposition to Shrewsbury Races, 35

Pimhill, a spin from, 73.
Pitchford, 10, 104.
,, Hall, 58.

Radnor, a fox killed near, 13.
Radnorshire and West Hereford, 4.
,, , a good run in, 102.
Rational Foxhunting; a reminiscence, 106.
Roosting Fox, a, at Cruckton, 47.
"Running Devil" the, 83.
Ruyton-XI-Towns, a fair day, 54.

Shrewsbury Races, 9.
,, a step forward, 83.
,, prospects of, 13.
,, opposition to, 35.
,, under a cloud, 98.
,, Racecourse, Lease of, 32.
Shropshire, the, 4.
,, at Acton Burnel, 71.
,, ,, Atcham, 7, 51, 82, 95.
,, ,, Battlefield, 104.
,, ,, Berwick Hall, 96.
,, ,, Coton Hall, 17, 84.
,, ,, Cound, 89.
,, ,, Cressage, 36.
,, ,, Chetwynd-End, 49.
,, ,, Dorrington, 85.
,, Ellerton Hall, 88.
,, ,, Gnosall, 88.
,, ,, Hawkestone 5, 94.
,, ,, High Ercall, 26, 32, 90
,, ,, Leaton Knolls, 72.
,, Lythwood, 18.
,, ,, Cusiow, 21, 47.
,, ,, Peplow Hall, 62.
,, ,, Shawbury, 15, 32, 52.
,, ,, The Twemlows, 56.
,, ,, Walford, 85.
,, ,, Wem, 38.
,, ,, Yorton Station, 100.
South County, the Hunting of the, 53.
Spring Handicap Entries, 40.
Staffordshire North, 4.
,, South, 4.
Statistics, Turf, 17, 24.
Stutton Mill with the Bramham, 80
Sundorne, a merry night at, in '25, 34.

TURF STATISTICS, 17, 24.
Tadcaster Bar with the Bramham, 78.

UNITED PACK, THE, 4.

VULPICIDISM, 17.

WANT TO BE SUPPLIED, A, 53.
Watkins', Sir, at Aldersey, 22.
,, Baschurch, 14, 87, 99.
,, Broughton, 95.
,, Carden, 44.
,, Ellerton, 36.
,, Maesfen, 5, 6, 39.
,, Old Oswestry, 47.
,, Rednal, 18.
,, Sarn Bridge, 95.
,, Socket Gate, 40, 81.
,, West Felton. 36.
Watkins', Sir, at Whittington, 62, 69.
,, Whitchurch, 11, 1 23, 25, 29, 71, 89, 100.
Watkins', Sir, at Woodhill, 104.
Wedding Breakfast, a novel, 71.
Welshpool Steeplechases, 87.
Wheatland, the, 4.
Whittimores, the, a good draw at, 37
Wilkesley, at, with Mr. Corbet, 57.
Wright, Mr., Presentation to, 36.
Wynne, Mrs. Herbert, Presentation to, 91.
Wynnstay meet, the, 91.
,, Reflections, 93.

YORK AND AINSTY AT RIBSTON Park, 79.

Printed at the Office of "Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal," Shrewsbury.